

Spatial Hysteresis: glimpses of our yielding place

By

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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Bleach', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lucy Bleach

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Bleach'. The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name 'Lucy' written in a more compact, rounded style and the surname 'Bleach' in a more elongated, flowing style.

Lucy Bleach

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Abstract

Hysteresis is the extent to which the strain in a material reflects the stress to which it has been subjected; it also refers to the time lag exhibited by the material in reacting to this stress. In this project the material is our constructed place. Spatial hysteresis makes reference to theories in spatial history, particularly perceptions of place and landscape in post-colonial Australia.

The project examines the signs of strain as points of rupture in our urban veneer, which offer poetic potential and an opportunity for an intimate engagement within the prosaic urban realm. It also investigates the way things within their framework fall apart, and it is the ongoing maintenance of the framework that is as interesting as the emergence within the fractures. The project considers our imprint on our place, and the varying degrees to which the pressure of the print is sustained and maintained. The project reveals glimpses of a yielding urban landscape under stress.

The research has been pursued through a series of notional clusters, which serve to group the various investigations of the hysteresis in question. These clusters house pertinent artists and writers whose work inform and contextualise the project. The scope of artists is broad as their work may resonate with the project through concept and/or material. Artists such as Robert Smithson, Charles Simonds and Joan Grounds have been important for their ability to poetically and intimately describe a place within the perfunctory urban realm. Sophie Ristelhueber and Leni Hoffman have been influential for their works which deal with wounds, scars and cracks. Writers such as Susan Stewart, Gaston Bachelard, Miwon Kwon and Paul Carter have offered the project a contextual structure through concepts of intimacy and immensity, souvenir, poetic space, locational aesthetics and how landscape is claimed and absorbed. The thematic nature of the groups has acted as anchors and departure

points from which the bodies of work that make up the project have been produced.

There are four main clusters that provide the conceptual basis for the four groups of work. Briefly these clusters are:

- an invisible ongoing creepage of place;
- the construction and reconstruction of place;
- intervention and emergence;
- cracks and scars - the erasure and memory of place.

This research project incorporates a body of work that combines off-site installations and interventions that respond directly with a place, and studio-based gallery work, which brings the outside in and explores how the discrete may evoke the monumental. Some of the work has grown conceptually and materially from my previous practice, while other work produced within the project has been significant for trying new mediums, applications and ideas.

The work speaks of a yielding, groaning urban landscape. It acts as a document of the performance of repair/maintenance implicit in the constructed landscape, revealing an intimacy within the repair. The work examines the blur between fact and fiction in the recounting of a landscape changed, as a conceptual indication of the hysteresis at large. In our urban constructed environment, the sites of impermanence, fray and repair can be seen as sites of vitality, offering opportunities for an intimate engagement within the typically perfunctory urban realm. The work speaks to these sites of intimacy; it accentuates an act of encounter and encourages space for a simultaneous and imaginary life. These sites are like anecdotes; they are not part of the official history or constructed reality of the place, yet their presence induces an emotional engagement with it.

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Chapter One:

The central argument

Spatial hysteresis – glimpses of our yielding place

Hysteresis is the extent to which the strain in a material reflects the stress to which it has been subjected; it also refers to the time lag exhibited by the material in reacting to this stress.

The term *hysteresis* is applied within the engineering field, to describe technically the evidence of stress found in materials. I came across the word while flicking through the Macquarie Dictionary, wishing to play with readings of history/hysteria. Dictionary foraging is an important beginning to any work or project I undertake, as a playful, loose, linguistic and interpretative development of emerging ideas. I liken it to rock hopping at the beach: if you don't think too much about it, you skim slippery surfaces with childlike luck; if you flit through words in the dictionary moments of great serendipity can occur, and somehow you manage to describe what you have been thinking in a way you never knew. Finding the term *hysteresis* proved to be one of these moments.

In this project the material reflecting stress is our constructed place. *Spatial hysteresis* makes reference to theories in spatial history, particularly perceptions of place and landscape in post-colonial Australia.

The project examines the signs of strain as points of rupture in our urban veneer on the landscape, which offer poetic potential and an opportunity for an intimate engagement within the prosaic urban realm. The project examines the way things within their framework fall apart, and it is the ongoing maintenance of the framework that is as interesting as the emergence within that framework of the fractures that indicate its stress. The project considers our imprint on our place, and the varying degrees to which the pressure of that *print* is sustained and maintained.

This research project investigates the poetic potential of the frays and cracks in our constructed place, our footings, and our urban fabric. In our urban constructed environment, the sites of impermanence, fray and repair can be seen as sites of vitality, offering opportunities for an intimate engagement within the typically perfunctory urban realm. This research project speaks to these sites of intimacy, to accentuate an act of encounter and to encourage space for a simultaneous and imaginary life. These sites are like anecdotes; they are not part of the published history or constructed reality of the place, yet their presence induces an emotional engagement with it.

In undertaking the research, my aim has been to produce work of a critical level that rigorously contributes to its field through an original expression of ideas. It is my intention that the work presents the hysteresis and its associated implications in such a way that the viewers' curiosity is raised, their awareness of their engagement with it is heightened and that they have in some way been moved to consider their yielding place.

Background to the project

For the past sixteen years since completing a BFA at the College of Fine Arts, UNSW, my practice has focused on the public place. This has included exploring constructed landscapes, urban geography and the physical evidence of the movement of time in public space. The focus of my practice has shifted over the years. Earlier works have tended to be exclusively site specific, literally responding to locations as a way of observing how we construct and live in our world. As my practice has developed and coinciding with my shift from Sydney to Hobart my work has tended to investigate conceptual themes as much as responding to physical sites. More recently my work has been a response to the tangible cultural/natural strata found in Tasmania. These strata are evident in the compressed cultural and natural landscapes that encompass a remarkably

broad range of environments within close proximity. These include places that are wild, cultivated, colonial, industrial, suburban and urban. It is this proximity of the immense and wild nudging up to the intimacy of the urban and domestic that I find particular to Tasmania, and this informs the way I undertake my practice.

There are three works that I have created in Hobart within the last three years that I believe are pertinent as forerunners to the project. The concerns/ideas that have emerged in these works are examined in more depth and with more critical focus within the project.

The first of these works was the intervention *Sub*. In 2003 I approached the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (RTBG) in Hobart to create some initial interventions within the Gardens' site. It is worth noting that the RTBG is considered amongst professionals in the field to contain Australia's finest collection and exhibition of temperate climate plants. As a visitor, it is certainly a most aesthetically pleasing and contrived landscape. With this in mind, I was intrigued at the level of energy required to maintain this highly cultivated and controlled site, and I wanted to highlight the unseen that supports the seen. I chose to 'map' out the subterranean infrastructure of the cultivated site; that which is horticultural, the natural root systems of the specimens; and that which is technical, the services that support the maintenance of the site.

Sub consisted of two interventions. One involved inferring the root systems of seven Liquidambar trees. Fibrous shaped strips of orange builders' plastic were pinned into the grass beneath each tree, evoking a lurid x-ray-like photograph of the root system. The second intervention represented an underground services map of an area where there was convergence of the gardens' sub-infrastructure. This was a lawn area popular for sprawling on. By spraying water-based paint in coded colours, the various services were marked out (sewerage, electricity, irrigation, storm water etc.). Over the exhibition the coloured grass was left to grow, with the remaining grass mown in between. This produced the effect of a

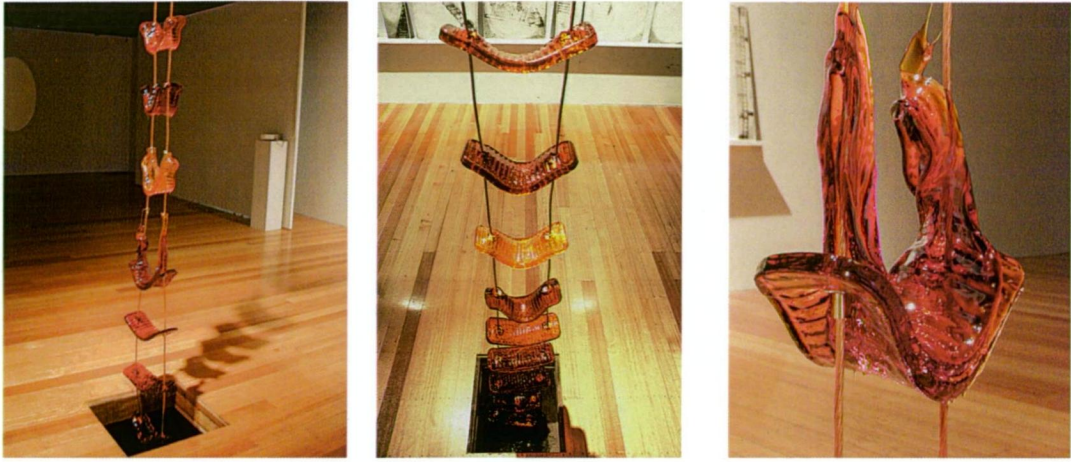
raised map of the sub-scape, which, curiously, visitors tended to unwittingly step over.



Figures 1-3: **Sub**. 2003.

The work *Rung*, at CAST Gallery, North Hobart, in the same year, examined the electrical infrastructure that supported the gallery site¹. Using toffee as a metaphor for energy, a rope ladder hung from the rafters, where the gallery's lighting was housed, down into the gallery space and through a trap door cavity in the gallery's floor. The ladder consisted of exposed copper electrical wire representing the rope, and cast toffee steps as the rungs. Lights were focused on the ladder, the heat from which increased the toffee's process of changing from a solid to a liquid, resulting in visceral mutations, which slowly dripped through the man-hole opening into a circular cavity dug into the earth below. This outcome led me to realize the entropic and poetic potential of toffee.

¹ *Rung* formed part of the 'Scape' group exhibition, curated by Celia Lendis. CAST Gallery. 2003



Figures 4-6: **Rung**. 2003.

In 2004 I undertook a residency at the RTBG to produce a site-specific installation, responding to the gardens' history as a market garden. The result was *Yield*, a twelve-month work-in-progress. The installation consisted of a four hundred metre square field of triticale wheat, through which visitors entered via a central gate, and which led to a small circle of the original lawn. From this lawn led three paths to three plots. The first plot was a bitumen car parking space, in which the grass filled cracks represented a contour map of the Gardens site. The second plot was a paved-in heirloom vegetable garden, growing specimens taken from a letter written in 1826 by Governor Arthur to an English nurseryman, requesting vegetable seeds from England for the growing colony. The vinyl lettering on the pavers replicated the supplier's own handwriting, which had been scanned through the Gardens' sign-writing equipment. The third plot consisted of a derelict submerging jetty, sinking into a plot of partially unrolled farmed grass turf. The jetty pointed to an area of the Gardens' that was reclaimed land.

The turf suggested that the surface had been peeled back, or that it represented the stylized waves of the adjacent River Derwent. The work raised concerns about the landscape: its cultivation; its urbanization; its naming and the nomenclature and its power as a colonizing force; the cultural topography - the way we define our landscape; what and how we remember that landscape, how those responses informed the work.



Figures 7-13: *Yield*, RTBG, 2004. Entrance gate (above), sinking jetty and peeled back turf (below), heirloom vegetable garden and vinyl text on pavers (middle) and bitumen parking space with grass crack contour map (bottom).



The concepts and materials explored in these works have evolved and grown to undergo a rigorous investigation in order to produce the body of work within this project.

The Project

This research project incorporates a body of work that combines off-site installations and interventions that respond directly to a place, and gallery work that brings the outside in and explores how the discrete may evoke the monumental. The work speaks of a yielding, groaning urban landscape. It acts as a document of the performance of repair/maintenance required in the constructed landscape. It speaks about an intimacy that is required to reveal the nature of those repairs. The work also examines the blur between fact and fiction in the recounting of a landscape changed, as a conceptual indication of the hysteresis at large.

The project has drawn inspiration and its context through research into the field of artists and writers in which the work sits. This field represents an area of contemporary art practice and theory pertinent to the second half of last century and up to the present.

Broadly, the field reflects our imprint on our place, and the varying degrees to which the pressure of that print has been sustained. It encompasses artists and writers whose work deals with the way in which we construct our place; the frailty of the perceived permanence of this construction and its entropy; our zones of creepage; intimacy within the public prosaic realm; erasure and transformation within our place, and the manner in which we apply nostalgia to represent and recollect it; and frays within the constructed fabric, the fracture zones and the scars.

Miwon Kwon discusses the evolution and realm of this field of site-specific art:

Furthering previous (at times literal) attempts to take art out of the museum/gallery space-system (recall...Robert Smithson's adventures in the wastelands of New Jersey or isolated locales in Utah), contemporary site-oriented works occupy hotels, city streets, housing projects, prisons, schools, hospitals, churches, zoos, supermarkets, and they infiltrate media spaces such as radio, newspapers, television and the internet. ...the distinguishing characteristic of today's site-oriented art is the way in which the art work's relationship to the actuality of a location (as site) and the social conditions of the institutional frame (as site) are both subordinate to a *discursively* determined site that is delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, or cultural debate.²

The body of work produced within the project along with the associated key influential writers and artists can be placed within the following notional clusters. There are additional artists, writers and references that contribute to the contextualisation that inform the project: these are presented along with the artist and writers mentioned below, in more detail within the next chapter.

An invisible ongoing creepage of place, the subscape infrastructure and the vast, public realm of 'hard yakka' as yielding, intimate site.

The works within this cluster include *Pit(ch)*, *Tent Trip(tych)* and *Going Down*.



Figures 14-16: *Tent Trip(tych)*, 2006.

Artists and writers pertinent to this cluster include: Robyn Backen for her visual embodiments of the abstract world of telecommunications, Du-Ho

² Kwon, Miwon, *One place after another, site-specific art and locational identity*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT press.2002. Pg 24 and 26.

Suh who explores intimacy, the public/private realm, itinerancy and identity; Paul Carter³ and Simon Ryan⁴ for post-colonial theories of how we claim space; Miwon Kwon⁵ for her critique of site and locational identity; and Nicolaus Bourriard's⁶ theories of relational art.

How we construct and reconstruct place beyond recognition, and the entropy implicit in this constructed place.

The works within this cluster include *Infill-materials of mass construction*, *Toffee Fissure*, *Spirit Level*, *Furnace* and *Pliant*.



Figures 17-19: *Infill – materials of mass construction*, 2006; *Toffee Fissure*; *Spirit level*, 2007.

Artists and writers relevant to this cluster include: Charles Simmonds for his micro-civilizations; Robert Smithson and his entropy work; Joan Grounds for the site-referential installation *Quiver*; Gaston Bachelard⁷ and Susan Stewart⁸.

Intervention and emergence. Ideas of surface, veneer and eruption and how we move through space.

The works within this cluster include: *Tread Softly* and *Paddy Pallin(drome)*

³ Carter, Paul, *The Road to Botany Bay*, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1987.

⁴ Ryan, Simon, *The Cartographic Eye: how explorers saw Australia*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

⁵ Kwon [2002].

⁶ Bourriard, Nicolaus, *Relational Aesthetics*. France: Les presses du reel, 2002.

⁷ Bachelard, Gaston, *The Poetics of Space*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994 edition.

⁸ Stewart, Susan, *On longing, narratives of the miniature*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984.



Figures 20-21: *Tread Softly*, 2006, and *Paddy Pallin(drome)*, 2007.

Artists and writers relevant to this cluster include: Olafur Eliasson for his installations that heighten an awareness of how we navigate through a space; Sylvia Plath⁹ for her 'mushroom' poetry; and Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*- the cellar.

Cracks and scars and the erasure and memory of place: the sentiment associated in the perception, representation and recounting of place.

The work within this cluster includes: *Bitumen Profiles*



Figures 22-23, *Bitumen Profiles*, 2007.

Writers and artists relevant to this cluster are: Leni Hoffman for her plasticine crack filling; Sophie Ristelhueber for her photographic work about war wounds in the landscape; Narelle Jubelin's installations of petit point which represent cultural and political issues; Rosemary Laing's *Groundspeed*, Edward S. Casey¹⁰ and Gaston Bachelard

⁹ Hughes, Ted (ed), *Sylvia Plath: Collected poems*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1981.

¹⁰ Casey, Edward S, *Remembering*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Chapter Two:

The project within the field

Formative artists whose work initially ignited my curiosity and still maintain inspiration for me include Robert Smithson, Charles Simmonds and Joan Grounds. Collectively, their processes of art making showed me that art could be delicate while monumental, ephemeral while maintaining an echo (a conceptual flare on the retina), poetic while perfunctory, and offer an interpretation of site as the work.

As my own practice has developed, the list of influential artists has grown. In this chapter, as notions within the field unfold and are examined, artists and writers whose work has influenced the project will be discussed.

The artists and writers fall into categories within this chapter that relate to those outlined in Chapter One, yet because their work may resonate materially or conceptually with various notions, a slippage of artists and writers between the themes occurs. In this way, the body of work produced and placed within the clusters in Chapter One, tends to draw inspiration from a crossover of the categories of artists discussed in this chapter.

2.1 Zones of creepage

How we claim space, how we move through space

In order to see the evidence of strain within our constructed place, the project needs to acknowledge the place constructed and conceived. As mentioned in the first chapter, the title of the thesis, 'Spatial hysteresis' is a word play on *spatial histories*, and makes reference to Australian postcolonial writers, whose work provides a critique of the culture and manner in which our space has been mapped out and absorbed in history. Writers such as Paul Carter¹, Simon Ryan² and George Seddon³ have

¹ Carter, Paul [1987]

been pivotal for notions of the history of colonisation and urbanisation as non-linear, linguistic and fragmentary. As a space from which to discuss veneer, construction and fraying within the intervention, these writers offer the project a foundation and a point of departure, through their critique of fact and metaphor and how we gauge our place.

The project explores the way we perceive, traverse, claim and continually transform our place. If the thought exists, if an awareness is there, a space is already partially claimed. And so tracks are marked, paths are sealed; duckboards become floorboards; trenches are dug, pipes are laid, earth is shovelled back in, and the fibrous infrastructure is in place.

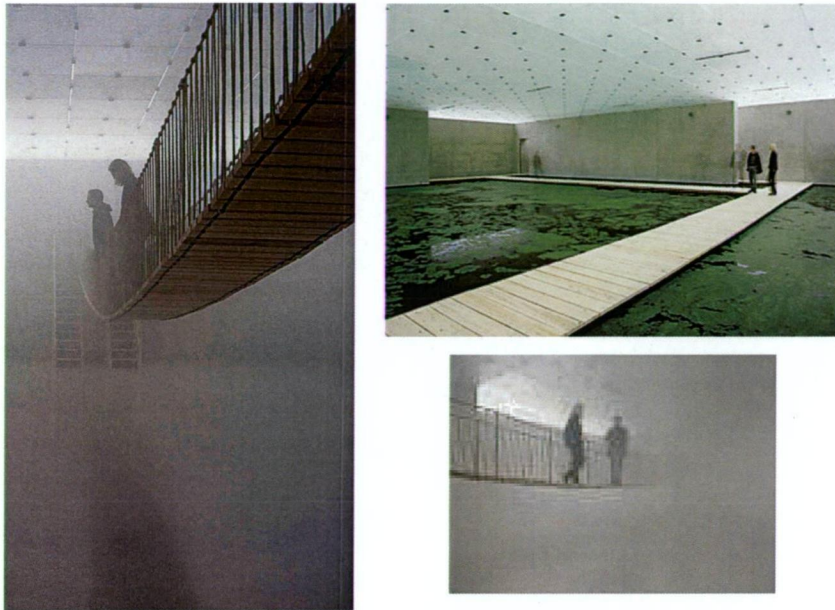
Pathways are a powerful metaphor for the way we move through space, how space is constructed to permit our access and ultimately to be claimed by us. In his work *The Mediated Motion* at the Kunsthhaus Bregenz in Austria (2001), Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson collaborated with landscape architect Gunther Vogt to produce a series of spaces within the gallery that evoked natural environments. By using materials such as water, duckweed, fog, fungus and wood he transformed the stark internal gallery spaces into places associated with the outside realm of his homeland, such as sleek bodies of water and foggy voids. These environments were mediated by a wooden plank pathway, which trailed through the spaces as boardwalks, steps and plank bridges, guiding the visitors' motion and interaction with each environment.

While the installation worked to engage the audience in a range of senses, to be surrounded and contained by them, the path served to focus their awareness of how they navigated each space, providing them with a point from which to view the work, but not touch it, or for the environment to be touched by the viewer, directly. The way we construct veneers on the

² Ryan, Simon [1996]

³ Seddon, George, *Landprints: reflections on place and landscape*.
Cambridge; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

landscape in order for us to move through it ultimately changes the landscape experienced.



Figures 24-26: Olafur Eliasson, *Mediated Motion*. 2001.

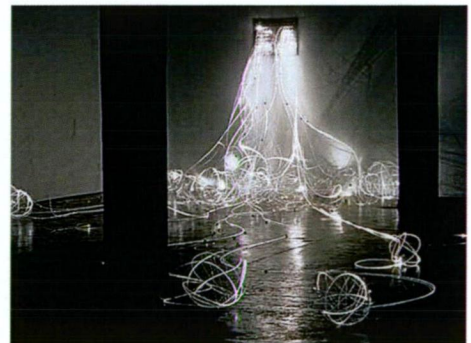
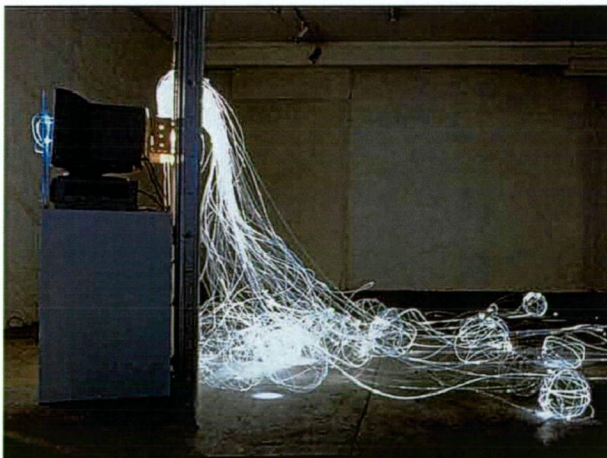
The zones of creepage are not confined to the surface. The sub-scape is an elusive player within the occupancy of place.

Australian artist Robyn Backen has explored making the unseen visible within numerous works. Her engagement with fibre optics has led to visual manifestations of the abstract place occupied by the communication technology. Codes of technological language are prevalent in her work, using signal-based communications such as Morse code, to convey varieties of applied language ranging from that of theorists, poets, and scientists. Backen's comment on language describing ourselves in our place, resonates with the project's interest in the linguistic colonisation of place. Paul Carter discusses this in *The Road to Botany Bay*:

Figures of speech, place names among them, correspond symbolically to the scope of exploration itself: they are a means of making sinuous paths

comprehensible, a means of recording the journey as it impresses itself on the consciousness.⁴

These sinuous paths are powerfully evoked within a contemporary urban geography in Backen's work *Littoral* (Artspace, Sydney 1998). The work comprises a partition wall separating two disparate but connected installations. On one side of the partition a computer set on a plinth has cables attached to a perspex screen which sits proud of the computer screen. These cables unravel to the back of the computer, where their casing is stripped back to reveal the fibre optic conduit within. The mass of conduit is fed through a mesh-like plate in the partition wall, which, on penetrating through to the other side, cascades to the floor like a waterfall. The fibre optic cables end up wrapped into buoy-like balls, sprawled over the gallery floor, emitting Morse code messages. The installation works as a metaphor for the evolving language of communications technology, and how this then describes the transforming landscape the technology sits within. The containment on the surface of the technology belies the fluidity and at times torrent of information pulsing within the technology.



Figures 27-28: Robyn Backen, *Littoral*. 1998.

In the exhibition catalogue Susan Best discusses the morphing landscape that is both geographical and technological. She muses on how Backen's work describes the technological change through the evolving

⁴ Carter, Paul, [1987], Page 30-31.

technologies of communication, from the dot/dash of Morse code to the filaments of fibre optics. Best goes on to reflect on this impact on the physical landscape:

Changes to geography enter somewhat obliquely here. The popular wisdom is that geography as such has been transformed by the advent of new technologies. There is something of this digital overrun of the landscape in Backen's work: the Morse code of the adjacent military shoreline has been rerouted along more contemporary lines, and markers of safe anchorage – maritime buoys – have turned into luminous balls of optical fibre...these intertwinings of new and old demonstrate what we should now call the 'littoral sensibility'.⁵

The changing framework of technological language describes a changing geographic and cultural topography. Just as the strata of the landscape are penetrated by the creeping technological infrastructure, the depths of our cultural landscape provides a bed for a complex nexus of evolving perceptions of place and the language we use to describe it.

It is within this 'littoral sensibility' that we find a yielding place, immersed in the flux of construction, fray, repair, and fathoming.

Bricks and hot mix

How we construct our place

I am continually inspired and engaged by work that utilises masonry in a poetic manner.

The American artist Charles Simmonds and his micro-mythic ruins waiting to be discovered within a brick wall of an urban metropolis was the first to catch my imagination. Simmonds' *Dwelling* series in particular, such as

⁵ Best, Susan, *Bathing in the Element*, Artspace catalogue essay, 1998.

Dwelling, East Houston Street, New York, 1972 and *Dwelling – La Biennale di Venezia, 1978* offer much for their dialogue with an urban landscape in flux, representing opportunism within the strain. I am also drawn to their inspirational whimsy. I think it was the first time the thought hit me: 'this is us, this is what we do, this is how we make our place. With a brick'. I recall feeling awed (and continue to be) that these miniature bricks made me feel part of a greater realm, that I blurred into the place that was constructed. Through viewing this miniature world I was being pushed beyond my complicit entanglement of our urban space, to a position of passive objectivity.



Figures 29-30: Charles Simonds. *Dwelling – La Biennale di Venezia, 1978* (left), and *Dwelling, East Houston Street, New York, 1972*, (right).

In her book, *On longing, narratives of the miniature*, Susan Stewart describes this sensation:

We are able to hold the miniature object within our hand, but our hand is no longer in proportion with its world; instead our hand becomes a form of undifferentiated landscape, the body of a kind of background.⁶

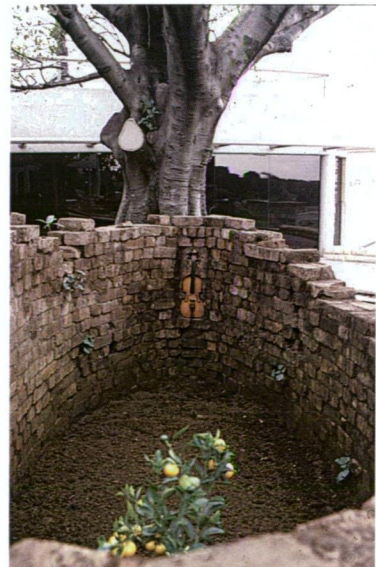
Already, something fantastically mundane as a brick was becoming full of possibilities.

Soon after this I viewed Australian artist Joan Grounds' work *Quiver* in the 1989 *Perspecta*, at the Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney. *Quiver* was built

⁶ Stewart, Susan, [1984], page 70.

during the reconstruction of an outdoor area adjacent to the new wing of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. For the duration of the exhibition, the site went from an empty lot to a finished patio outdoor area. Taking advantage of this strong contextual constraint, *Quiver* was conceived to appear to be either under construction or an 'archaeological' uncovering of a walled garden.

The work consisted of an elliptical brick wall, about hip high, which created an empty space, the shape of an eye. The wall enclosed a miniature, elliptical garden space. A three quarter violin was imbedded in the walls of the oval enclosure. Opposite the violin was a calamondron tree in fruit. Built into the wall were violets that were kept in bloom for the duration of the exhibition and one small ficus tree of the same species as the large ficus next to *Quiver*. The work was accessible on site, from ground floor balconies through branches of the large ficus, and was visible through the lower floor large glass walls of the Gallery.



Figures 31-32: Joan Grounds, *Quiver*. 1989.

Several things struck me about this work. Firstly, it was so poetic and non-linear, it described something I will always be discovering. It looked like it had always been there and would remain there; in fact it was gone in two weeks. The bricks, typically symbolic of mass construction, were tailor-

made for the elliptical shape, and being eye shaped, for the individual eye. With this work I started to perceive how a material of such public and linear application, could unfold into something intimate, private and abstract.

In Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*, the chapter 'Intimate Immensity' discusses how a discreet framework can promote vast depths of reverie. He muses that to be physically still is to trigger an inner motion, that 'immensity is the movement of the motionless man'⁷. He quotes Milosz's book *L'amoureuse initiation*:

As I stood in contemplation of the garden of the wonders of space, I had the feeling I was looking into the ultimate depths, the most secret regions of my own being.⁸

Ground's installation Quiver, the walled-in garden eye, invited us to peer into the infinite space it reflected.

Around the time I started appreciating the possibilities of a brick, I was spending lengths of time hitching to national parks to go bush walking, to reach wilder places (where you don't find bricks, but might consider their absence). At this time I became acquainted with the road. To travel on it at the speed of an animal, not a machine, made me appreciate its horizontal magnitude, while also reflecting on its intimate matrix. I soon realised that another material from the public/urban domain full of metaphoric possibilities was hot mix/bitumen, whether in its formulaic manifestation as the road, a pathway, or other.

Bitumen is ubiquitous; it is symbolic of our urban colonisation of place, and useful for its metaphor as a topographical veneer and contemporary layer of deposition over the greater geology. It is sourced from the earth, to be

⁷ Bachelard, Gaston, [1994 ed], pg 184.

⁸ Bachelard refers to Oscar Vladislas de Lubicz Milozs's book *L'amoureuse initiation*, page 64, in his own book *The Poetics of Space*, pg 189.

used to conceal and seal an increasing ratio of the earth's surface. It is also remarkable as a material that fluctuates between a solid and liquid form.

The late American artist Robert Smithson is celebrated for his monumental non-site works, which speak to our massive intervention of the landscape. His bitumen pour work, *Asphalt rundown* (1969), occurred in conjunction with his exhibition at L'Attico Gallery in Rome, and involved a tip-truck dumping its load of hot mix down the side of an abandoned gravel quarry outside the city. The bitumen took the shape of its flow down the slope. Over time, as the weather heated up or cooled down, the flow expanded and contracted. The significance of the Smithson's 'flow' for this project is its reference to entropy; how the fluid properties of the medium result in continuous repair to maintain its function, and how the material outside its framework falls apart.



Figure 33: Robert Smithson, **Asphalt Rundown**. 1969.

The German artist Leni Hoffman is well known for her plasticine interventions within the urban landscape, which offer imprints of urban movement through space and time. Hoffman has also explored the qualities of asphalt. In her work *Brisago*, Kunstverein, Hannover 2004, she framed up half a gallery stair way with timber formwork, which she then infilled with blue metal road base, and sealed with a final layer of asphalt. Once the hot mix had cooled, the framework was removed, and the under

layer of gradient began to crumble away from the bitumen it supported. Over the exhibition period, the asphalt cracked due to lack of framework and internal reinforcement. Like Smithson's pour, the medium without its framework, falls apart.



Figure 34: Leni Hoffman, *Brisago*. 2004.

2.2 Cracks and scars

The frailty of the 'permanence'

The project aims to consider notions of our yielding place. As discussed in the first chapter, place is defined as the realm we construct, our urban colonization of place, the cultural intervention of the landscape. How this place yields from the strain of various causes (within and outside, natural or not, intentional/ incidental) is the subject matter for several artists whose work has been influential to this project.

Marcel Duchamp, in a television interview with James Johnson Sweeney, reflected on an incident with his *Large Glass*:

JJS: So here you are, Marcel, looking at your *Large Glass*.

MD: Yes, and the more I look at it, the more I like it. I like the cracks, the way they fall. You remember how it happened in 1926, in Brooklyn? They put the two panes on top of one another on a truck, flat, not knowing what they were carrying, and bounced for nearly sixty miles into Connecticut, and that's the

result! But the more I look at it the more I like the cracks. They have a shape. There is a symmetry in the cracking, the two crackings are symmetrically arranged and there is more, almost an intention there, an extra – a curious intention that I am not responsible for, a ready-made intention, in other words, that I respect and love.⁹

While Duchamp's cracks differ from the points of rupture of place examined within the project, his appreciation for forces beyond our control and how things play out after the initial impact, resonates well. Within the sphere of hysteresis, our place is full of 'ready-made intentions'.

Walking along a bitumen path, I am always captivated by the opportunistic eruptions of moss and grass found forcing their way through a miniscule crack. These plants are referred to as colonizers, the first to take hold, occupy a space after a disturbance.

The word *relentless* springs to mind. I think of the relentless effort involved firstly in the clearing, grading, forming, pouring and laying of the path. I think of the relentless forces suppressed or contained beneath; roots, seeds, optical fibre conduit, stormwater pipes. I think of the relentless manner in which these things make their way through the surface. And I think of the relentless maintenance required to keep this place as this place.

Susan Stewart remarks on this in her introduction:

In the notion of return, of cycle, of reclamation of the landscape, lies the futility and productive possibility of human making.¹⁰

⁹ Edited version of *A conversation with Marcel Duchamp* television interview conducted by James Johnson Sweeney, NBC, January 1956. Peterson, Elmer and Sanouillet, Michel (eds), *The writings of Marcel Duchamp*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1989.

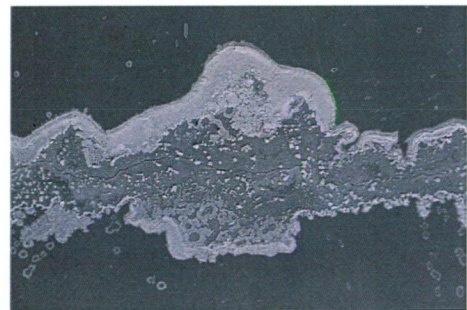
¹⁰ Stewart, Susan, [1984], Pg 2.

Cracks, ruptures, frays and fissures are intriguing for what they represent, and for the attention they provoke.

In 1994 Australian artist Bonita Ely had taken up residence in the Australia Council studio in Los Angeles. Ely was setting up her show *sleeper's ties* which included an off-site intervention using disused railway sleepers, salt/plaster 'fossils' of tools and implements, salt-packed metal plates from the railway yard which rusted over the duration of the exhibition, and a silk organza column that was attached to the infrastructure of the building via an air-conditioning duct protruding into the space from the ceiling. While she was installing the work the city experienced a significant earthquake. Typically there were repercussions felt from the quake throughout the city. Ely addressed this in the work and in a discussion with her she described the process of the work:

After the earthquake, cracks appeared in the concrete floor of the gallery. I poured a saturated salt solution into the cracks to 'heal' the trauma to the fabric of the building [society]. When it dried it left beautiful white crystal marks across the floor.¹¹

The salt-filled cracks spread through the concrete floor and forked out under the silk organza column.



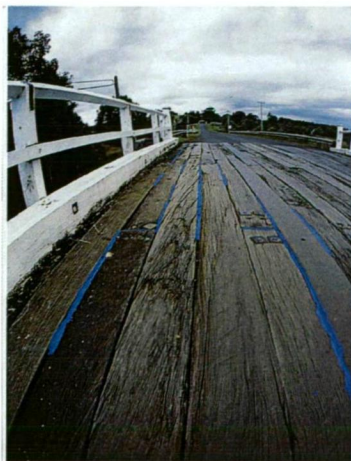
Figures 35-36: Bonita Ely, *Sleeper's Ties*. 1994.

This work conveys an intimate, visually poetic and materially pertinent response to the monumental scale of the tectonic forces at work.

¹¹ Ely, Bonita, April 2006.

The concrete slab floor, analogous to an urban continental plate, suffers from the impact of collision. Its very material evidently inferior to the greater geology, within which it lays its foundations. Ely's excellent 'human' response to heal all wounds, like a nurse or parent cleansing the wound with salt water (ouch), or like a member of a road crew patching a crack in the road speaks of our relentless need to maintain our being, our footing.

When Leni Hoffman undertook a residency at Southern Cross University, Lismore, in 1993, she produced an off-site intervention, *Marelle*, which responded to the gaps between the planks of an old bridge in Bangalow (northern NSW). Hoffman worked at night, as the daytime traffic on the one lane bridge denied easy access, and proceeded to infill selected gaps with iridescent blue plasticine. The result was that the gaps became a heightened feature of the bridge, whose sole function is of bridging a gap. Over time the plasticine became attached to the tyres of passing traffic, and what remained assumed the colour of the tyres and the bridge. The work, while dealing with aesthetic imperatives of the artist, resonates with the project's focus on the quiet war we are all engaged in our struggle to plug up the leaky bucket, re-silicone the tile/bath fracture zone, plaster in the cracks in the wall, squeeze bitulastic into the cracks in the road. The plastic qualities of the plasticine emphasize the temporary nature of the repair.



Figures 37-38: Leni Hoffman, *Marelle*. 1993.

Scars index a crack/rupture/wound by marking the site of intervention/ violence. While urban sprawl can be considered to be a scar upon the landscape, because we are complicit within its process, it often falls to the scars within the scar to affect us, causing us to notice.

Sophie Ristelhueber is a French artist whose work for the past 20 years has been focused on the notion of scars and the wounded landscape. She is widely known for her photographic installations, which magnify the discreet details found within the massive scale of war-torn areas.

She has produced work from her visits to areas of conflict such as Bosnia, Beirut, Kuwait and the West Bank. Through documenting and mapping out the 'scars' of conflict, the works focus on the visual residue of violence amongst our place, and how the impact of the intrusion is absorbed to become part of the contemporary landscape.

Ristelhueber's work reflects her fascination with our temporary presence in the midst of an unending cycle of construction and inevitable destruction. She has concentrated on images of landscapes, uninhabited architecture, and interiors, and created installations not easily categorized by virtue of subject matter or presentation, yet powerfully expressive of the essence of our existence. Over the last twenty years Ristelhueber has often found the evidence of this concept in the traces and scars found on this earth and, even on our bodies.¹²

Martin Warnke in his book *Political Landscape, the Art History of Nature* writes on how the intrusion of war within the landscape creates a new landscape:

War could thus appear as an artificial nature drama; accordingly the war picture became a landscape picture. At the beginning of the Great War, Paul Klee, a Swiss, drew attention to this new phenomenon in the work *The War that Devastates the Land*. No human victims appear in it – only the fragmented landscape shooting up into new shapes. The landscape seems to be the

¹²

Sophie Ristelhueber: Details of the World, Catalogue Essay. Museum of Fine Arts. Boston, MA. September 25, 2001 – January 3, 2002.

playground of the destructive forces that deform and defigure it, rob it of its identity and transform it into quite new forms of reality¹³

In her work *Fait* (1992), Ristelhueber travelled to Kuwait two months after the conflict, 'to see a desert that no longer looked like a desert'. The seventy-one photographs offer aerial and on ground perspectives of raw/war wounds, debris and residue within the landscape. This work has been likened conceptually (and indeed visually) to Marcel Duchamp's and Man Ray's work *Dust Breeding*, for their perplexing reading of image. Interestingly, *Dust Breeding*, part of the *Large Glass* work, would later bear the cracks Duchamp admired so much.



Figure 39: Sophie Ristelhueber, *Fait (fact)*. 1992, (left).



Figure 40: Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, *Dust Breeding*. 1920, (right).

A more recent work, *WB* (2005) is a series of 54 photographs the artist took over 3 visits to the West Bank, which examine the metaphor of the blocked road due to conflict.

These images show a countryside where the roads between villages and cities have been cut off. Cut off, in the simplest possible way, by little trenches dug by a mechanical shovel, or obstructed by piles of rock or concrete blocks. On either side of these obstacles the roads are empty and amazingly present, petrified and

¹³ Warnke, Martin, *The Political Landscape: the Art history of Nature*. London: Reaktion Books, 1994. Pg 61.

purposeless. These roads have been deprived of their destinations: they no longer lead anywhere, anymore.¹⁴



Figure 41: Sophie Ristelhueber, *WB*. 2005.

The artist states in the exhibition catalogue: “you can find, in a very concentrated form, all the obsessions of my previous work: traces, scars, destruction of the human presence, or constructions of all sorts of obstacles to separate one human being from another.”¹⁵

Ristelhueber’s work highlights the volatility of our imprint, as much due to our own hand, as from external forces. Her work deals with the overt symbols of a dysfunctional society at war. The project responds to this examination of impact and residue, and the way our place yields and becomes re-absorbed within a new landscape. But where Ristelhueber deals with the overt, this project remains focused on the discreet, at times subliminal symbols of a place in constant war with the environment it has created, the battle to maintain our dominance over the inevitable flux within our constructed place.

¹⁴ Taken from the exhibition catalogue – *Sophie Ristelhueber ‘WB’* February 22 – May 1, 2005. Musée d’art moderne et contemporain (Mamco), Geneva.

¹⁵ Ibid

2.3 Erasure and nostalgia

The way we change place beyond recognition

While looking at the evidence of strain and yielding, the project also explores concepts of how place can be changed beyond recognition, how place can be erased and replaced, and it is either document, shadow or memory that alludes to the transformation. In this way the concept of 'yielding' is as much a physical occurrence, as it is intellectual. The ways in which truth yields to embellishment, fact gives way to fiction. This section of the chapter examines the notions of erasure within an urban context, and the sentiment and nostalgia employed to recall and represent the change and the changed.

When I undertook research towards the installation *Yield* at the RTBG 2004, I found in the State Archives photographs from the mid-1800's, that showed an area below Government House as a secluded bay of the Derwent River, where the Governor's launch was moored. I was familiar with this area as the 'children's lawn' at the RTBG, as I had spent much time in the years preceding the research, playing games with my own children there. It intrigued me to realise that the imaginary games we had enacted there, belonged to a landscape that had been formed by imagination (in a planning sort of way), and that the bay that had been reclaimed, was reduced to photographs and memory.

In the introduction to his book *Landscape and Memory*, Simon Schama muses how as 'a small boy with his head in the past'¹⁶ he enjoyed playing with ideas of time and space travel, in his stomping ground by the Thames River.

¹⁶ Schama, Simon, *Landscape and Memory*. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995, pg 5.

To go upstream was, I knew, to go backward: from metropolitan din to ancient silence; westward toward the source of the waters, the beginnings of Britain in the Celtic limestone.¹⁷

Schama's notion of moving upstream and 'backwards' in time is like slicing a cross-section through space to reveal the layers of activity within. In the case of the reclaimed bay at the RTBG, it is to stand in one place and bore down with imagination's/memory's auger.

Reclaimed land is a pertinent example of urban colonization, erasure and transformation. It indicates the manner in which we control/construct our place, and transform it beyond recognition. Many artists examine the way we manipulate and reconstruct our place, to serve varying agendas.

In their work, *The Memory Line* (1996), for the *Restoring the Waters Project*, Auburn Council, Sydney, collaborative artists Jennifer Turpin and Michaelie Crawford deal with the urban imperatives implicit in the constructing of place, causing place to change often beyond recognition. The site the work responds to is 'Five Paddock Creek' in suburban Fairfield, where the natural creek has been diverted into a concrete canal system that combines creek and storm water, removing the water flow from its natural course. Turpin and Crawford chose to trace the original creek's path through the undulating open grassland by cultivating a serpentine ribbon of soil in which they grew rye-corn grass. The work shows how the creek's path responded to the topography of the site, in comparison to the urban planning constraints of the canal system. Whether it was the intention of the artists, the work speaks of the layers of colonization of place, evident in the hard surfaces of infrastructure, but also of the cultivated landscape. The rippling effects of exotic cultivation within the endemic landscape are a subtle but no less potent manifestation of the claiming and reclaiming of place. That the artists have sown a crop that is traditionally used as feed for livestock, speaks of a pastoral landscape, which may have relied on the creek. Yet that pastoral

¹⁷ Schama, Simon, [1995], pg 5.

landscape is as alien to the previous endemic landscape as the contemporary urban environment is. While the aesthetics of the work are poetically bucolic and reflect a sinuous movement through space, the choice of material to describe the original landscape is fraught; for the cultivated landscape it reflects is as complicit in the erasure of the landscape as is the urban concrete canal. It is this interesting use of a romantic association to describe the changed landscape, as much as the tracing of the erasure that resounds with this project.

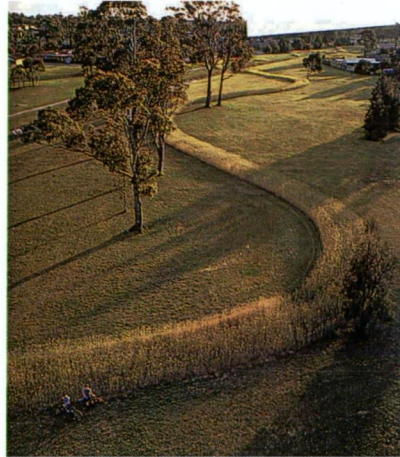


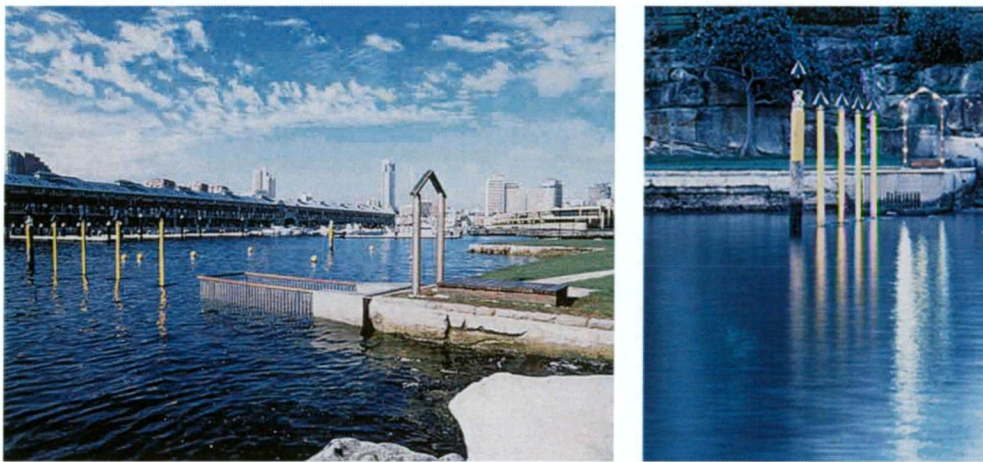
Figure 42: Jennifer Turpin and Michaelie Crawford, *The Memory Line*. 1996.

In her public artwork, *Archeology of Bathing* (1999), for the Sydney Open Museum public art initiative, Robyn Backen marks out the perimeter of the old Domain Baths for Ladies, formally at Woolloomooloo Bay. The artwork reveals a layering of claiming, reclaiming, and de-claiming place resulting as much from a response to change in use, as to the implications of disuse. The work refers to a period of engagement within the evolving community's affiliation with the place as a site for bathing, as indicated by signage on the site:

The bay has a long association with bathing. It is reported to have been used by the Cattigal people prior to and after European settlement and it is along this shore that Sydney's first baths were built. The Woolloomooloo baths nurtured some of Australia's greatest national and Olympic swimming champions.¹⁸

¹⁸ *Archeology of Bathing*, Robyn Backen, 1999. Sydney Sculpture Walk.

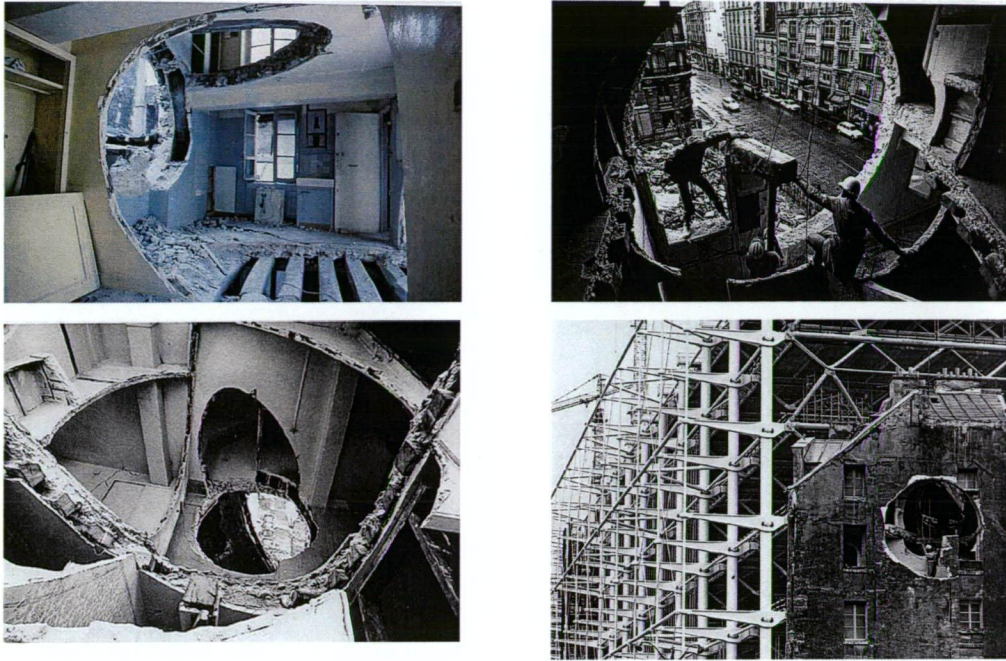
As European settlement traced aboriginal usage of the site, Backen traces the faded imprint of the constructed landscape of the European settlement. By using a collage of elements indicative of the Woolloomooloo public baths, such as boardwalk decking, a floating jetty, pier bollards and an inbuilt Morse code within the gateway, signalling across the bay anecdotal quotes describing the old baths; an impression of the tidal site as a public bath is evoked. *Archeology of Bathing* works as a nostalgic gesture, and like *The Memory Line*, draws on a certain romance to speak to the impermanence and erasure of place, and it is this sentiment that is pertinent to this project.



Figures 43-44: Robyn Backen, *The archaeology of Bathing*. 1999.

The built manifestation of our urban spatial sprawl is surprisingly flimsy. Where Turpin and Crawford traced a landscape changed, and Backen traced a constructed space disused and forgotten, American artist Gordon Matta-Clarke played with the tenuous qualities of our architectural place, tracing the ephemerality of buildings on 'death-row'. Slicing into the framework of soon-to-be demolished buildings in ways that joined vertical and horizontal planes of vision, somehow gave the impression of spherical maps splayed flat. Offering intriguing cross sections of internal architectural spaces that enable the viewer to be in more than one space at the one time, they expose a frailty of the materials, and to the foundations of our built place. Works such as *Bronx Floors*, New York City (1972), opened spatial arrangements to question where does one space

stop and the other start. *Conical Intersections*, Paris (1975), saw Matta-Clarke move beyond internal spaces to incorporate the outside realm.



Figures 45-48: Gordon Matta-Clarke, *Conical Intersections*. 1975.

Matta-Clarke's interventions and excavations are a form of urban archeology, navigating and revealing the materials and structure of condemned buildings. These buildings may be condemned for structural or developmental reasons. While the fabric of the building may still be sound, its necessity has become redundant, its purpose obsolete. This is a curious inversion of the way we claim space: redundancy creates a void from which new versions of our constructed place sprout. Matta-Clarke worked within the rupture, before it became a void; opening it out to expose and play with possibilities before they were erased, paying a certain homage to the opportunities within an architectural space, before it becomes replaced and defined by a perfunctory agenda.

Sydney artists Clare Healy and Sean Cordeiro similarly explore our architecturally constructed place, playing with the presumed permanence and inevitable impermanence of our materials and life of construction, and our emotional engagement with it. In their work, *The Cordial Home*

Project, Artspace, Sydney (2003), winner of the Helen Lempriere Travelling Scholarship for that year, they bought all the debris from a recently demolished house and transferred it to the gallery space, where they meticulously sorted and installed them in layers of materials within the internal pillar framework of the gallery space. The result is a compressed cubic metre unit of deleted urban existence. In their note accompanying the work, Cordeiro and Healy wrote:

The exhibition documents the transformation of a house from family home to unwanted scrap to art object. In deconstructing meanings of the home, there is a misguided yearning to discover its real essence as suggested once in its title...[W]e also wish to highlight the absurd delusion of 2 young artists owning a home in Sydney.¹⁹

The layering of the materials of the house is reminiscent of a geological cross-section of sedimentary rock, where each layer reflects the environment at the time of deposition. The work reveals an itemised and objectified strata of what was a lived experience. What was personal and intimate for the householders, becomes clinically and scientifically classified and sorted, the emphasis resting on the material more than the experience. While the work may offer a compression of the material manifestation of home life, the lived and emotional experience has gone out the window.



Figure 49: Clare Healy and Sean Cordeiro, *The Cordial Home Project*. 2003.

¹⁹ Clare Healy and Sean Cordeiro, *The Cordial Home Project*, Helen Lempriere Travelling Scholarship. Artspace, Sydney, 2003.

Italian Art Povera artist, Giuseppe Penone, refers to absence within place in his work *Contour line*, (1991), in which he cast the stone steps of the vacated Dean Clough Mill, West Yorkshire. The steps show the trace of hundreds of factory workers who moved through the space over the years of operation. The stairs were the site for the daily arrival and departure of the workers. When the factory closed the workers left, yet their imprint remained. Penone cast the steps in bronze, and the work is permanently on exhibition in the Dean Clough Studio Gallery site, so cataloguing the life of the site and its erasure, like a poetic souvenir.

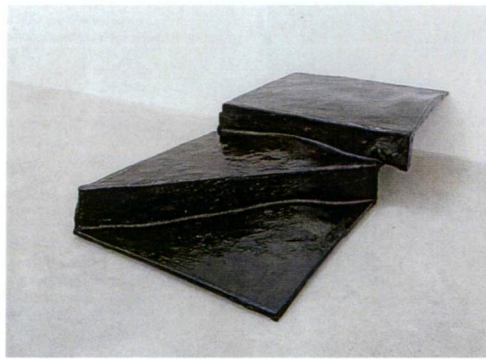


Figure 50: Giuseppe Penone, *Contour Line*. 1991.

Penone writes:

The building preserves the traces of one hundred and fifty years of labour. Generations of workers, shod in clogs, have worn out the floors and the stairs. They have left a trace of their continuous passing in the stone, that has slowly become concave, polished by the never ending displacement of an indistinct mass of human flesh that reminds one, in its effect, of the never ending stream of river water; it changes the shape of the hills of the place; it testifies to the obsessive, obligatory route of the work executed.²⁰

Penone's work focuses on tracing the experience within the constructed place, and while people move on and take their experiences with them, the imprint of their presence remains, showing the building to be more than the materials it's made from. Healy and Cordeiro alluded to this by

²⁰ Penone, Giuseppe, *Levelling*, extract from the *Eroded Steps*, published in *The Henry Moore Sculpture Trust Studio at Dean Clough 1989 – 1993*. Leeds: the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust. 1993.

only showing the materials in *The Cordial Home Project* and thus highlighting the absence of the personal.

It is widely acknowledged that sentiment is implicit in the act of remembering, so that memory as a document of the point before change and erasure is slippery and emotive.

In his book *Remembering*, Edward Casey delineates this process from historical reconstruction, and coins objects with attributes that promote nostalgia, "*reminiscentia*".

Rather than functioning strictly as reminders or as records of the past...they act as *inducers* of reminiscence. What counts here is not the accuracy with which they reproduce or suggest the past (as it would in the very different context of historical reconstruction); instead it is their special aptitude for arousing a reminiscent state of mind that matters.²¹

The Australian artist Narelle Jubelin, in her *petit-point* constructions, has explored the romanticised interpretation of the violent history of colonization. She is acutely aware of the power of the nostalgic object, constructing her installations with arrangements of imperial and colonial objects alongside embroidered representations. In her work, *Trade Delivers People* (1989-1993), Jubelin assembled artefacts of bounty from cultural exchange, including masks and jewellery, alongside *petit-point* depictions of modes of sea-faring transport.

The stylized preciousness of the arrangements asks us to consider the way we are shown what to remember then informs how we remember. In terms of 'glimpses of our yielding place', the selection of what those glimpses are, determines the place viewed, and blinkers perspectives on why it is yielding.

²¹ Casey, Edward S, *Remembering*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987, pg 110.

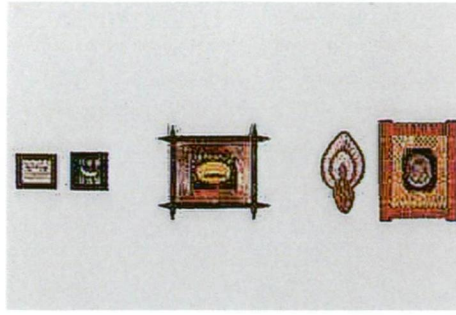


Figure 51: Narelle Jubelin, *Trade Delivers People* (detail). 1989-1993.

Australian artist Rosemary Laing's work *Groundspeed* (2005) resonates with this notion of romantic representation, truth/fiction and nature (wild) yielding to culture (tame). The photographic images of a range of luscious Axminster floral carpets installed on the forest floor in numerous locations speaks to the romantic depiction of the landscape, our constructed creepage, inside/outside and containing the container. By representing the unknown in a beautiful, comforting way, we tame the wildness, and our anxiety. In an essay Edmund Burke describes this strategy:

This description of the beautiful thus appears historically on the interface between the sublime and the picturesque, that rather bourgeois taming of the sublime which emerges at the end of the eighteenth century and flowers during the Victorian period. The terrifying and giganticized nature of the sublime is domesticated into the orderly and cultivated nature of the picturesque. While the sublime is marked by a potential recklessness, a dangerous surrender to disorder in nature, the picturesque is marked by a harmony of form, colour and light, of modulation approached by a distant viewer.²²

Laing turns the chaos of the bush into a charming and controlled conceit. The reality yields to the idea, and the forest floor becomes the drawing room carpet, where we may sit down, rest our feet and do our embroidery.

²²

Burke, Edmund, *A philosophical enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful, with an Introductory Disclosure Concerning Taste*. London: Oxford University Press, 1725.



Figures 52-53: Rosemary Laing, *Groundspeed*. 2005.

During the mid-1800's Tasmanian women employed elaborate and fashionable embroidery techniques from England to depict the endemic Tasmanian flora. In this way they were able to describe the new landscape through familiar, comforting, aesthetically pleasing and controlling terms. They were claiming their space within the domestic realm. A predominant style of embroidery used for these artworks was 'plush' embroidery, which interestingly is technically a small-scale handmade carpet. This style produces raised work which sits proud of the embroidery cloth, and gives a luscious three-dimensional affect. The famous Tasmanian colonial Louisa Anne Meredith was a forerunner in this field, being imitated by many other colonial women. Examples of hers and others work are scattered around Tasmanian Historic houses, producing the rippling effect of *reminscentia*.²³



Figures 54-55: examples of plush embroidery styles from unknown sources, circa 1830's.

²³

Historic houses in Hobart such as Narryna in Battery Point and Runnymede in Newtown both have collections that include plush style embroidery works.

2.4 Tents:

The public/private zone, the intimate and immense

Tents are symbolic of transit, itinerancy, and temporality. They suggest a discreet pocket within a vast space. A tent speaks of the intimate/interior within the immense/exterior.

Tents conjure images of explorers, adventurers, naturalists, nomads, army camps, and refugees – people living at the frayed edge of discovery, imperialism, subsistence and conflict. On a more domestic scale they symbolise family camping trips- where we get away from it all (our constructed place), often with everyone else.

The significance of tents to the project is the metaphor of inside within the outside, intimacy within the public realm and the temporality signalling a state of flux.

Korean born artist Do-Ho Suh plays with ideas of transparency, fragility, intimacy and impermanence. His sheer nylon architectural constructions explore ideas of place, cultural identity, transparency and privacy. His work *348 West 22nd St., Apt A, New York, NY 10011*, 2000, is a sheer nylon organza replica of his apartment in NY City, where he is now based. The installation is a complete layout of the apartment, with fine details like doorknobs, taps and light switches included. The work operates on several levels. It addresses his questioning of his cultural identity, shifting between cultures, his home is like a tent, when do you become of a place, when do you shift from visitor to local, is anything ever permanent? It also blurs the public/private boundaries. To view the work, the audience is tantalized by the complete access to every nook and cranny of Du-Ho Suh's dwelling, which induces an uncomfortable voyeuristic complicity.



Figures 56-57: Do-Ho Suh, *348 West 22nd St., Apt A, New York, NY 10011*. 2000.

The work is important to this project in the way it conveys the banal, material symbols of urban place in such a tenuous, delicate and transparent manner. What we take for granted as concrete necessities of daily life, are portrayed in such a manner that they could easily be torn, frayed and crumpled, more like the clothes we wear (and repair) than the cupboards/houses they are stored in.

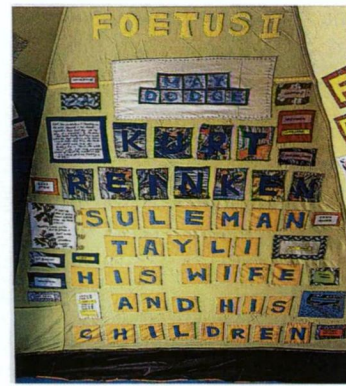
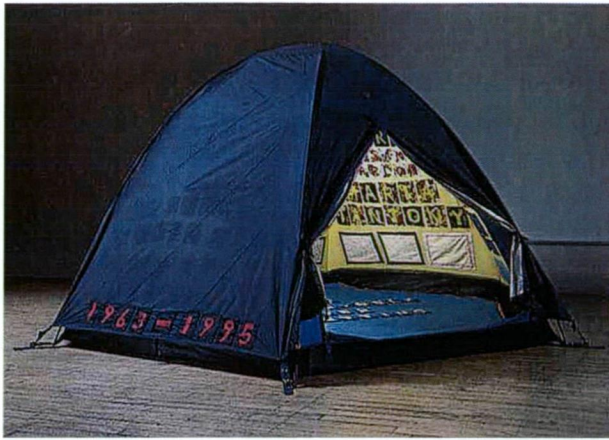
Tokyo born, American educated and now resident of Ho Chi Minh City, artist Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba examines the littoral edges implicit in the social and economic development of his adopted home, Vietnam. In his work, *Memorial Project Nha Trang, Vietnam: Towards the Complex – For the Courageous, the Curious and the Cowards*, 2001, Nguyen-Hatsushiba has filmed an underwater performance in which local fishermen race cyclos (bicycle-taxis). The cyclo drivers and fishermen in Vietnam are becoming rapidly dis-empowered within the country's economic growth, and the struggle of their underwater race reflects this. Towards the end of the performance, we see the destination that the drivers are racing towards, an underwater tent city, made of white, diaphanous, makeshift structures, which are reminiscent of a M.A.S.H. unit / refugee camp and allude to transience, folly and the frayed edges of economic growth. The makeshift structures clinging to the rocks describe the peripheral edges of a slowly creeping and expanding constructed place, and how the most vulnerable are pushed to inhabit these zones of flux.



Figures 58-60: Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Memorial Project Nha Trang, Vietnam: Towards the Complex – For the Courageous, the Curious and the Cowards*. 2001.

These sketchy tent-like structures are evocative of bandages applied to the craggy, inhospitable rock surfaces, which could tear the fabric with little effort. I like this connotation of a quick band-aid solution, which is inappropriate and cannot effectively tend the deeper-than-the-surface wound. The diaphanous and alluring folly has deeper implications.

In her work *Everyone I have ever slept with*, 1963-95, the British artist Tracy Emin has stitched the names of her sexual partners over a 20 year period onto pieces of fabric, which she has then patched to the external and internal walls of a camping tent. In a curious tension between the ennui, the tabloid confessional and the intimate, Emin's tent proves to be a powerful work. The way the explicit subject matter is depicted in such a hokey version of Amish quilting, masks a conquest/predatory tone of the work, and heightens the carnal inside/outside readings of the tent.



Figures 61-62: Tracy Emin, *Everyone I have ever slept with, 1963-95*. 1995.

The delicate and private content displayed within the cervical cavern of Emin's tent resonates with the ideas of intimacy within the public realm pertinent to the project. The 'women's work' of stitching and quilting the mundane material of the tent serves to personalize, domesticate and claim an otherwise impersonal public domain.

The artists and writers discussed in this chapter describe a place that is at once insatiable in its quest for new footings as it is vulnerable in performing their relentless upkeep and shaky in its recollection of the pre-claimed space.

Within the field, they represent a broad range of approaches to the concepts examined in this project. Some works may resonate with the project for singular reasons, while others have continued to resound with the various bodies of work that make up the project. The research within this chapter has provided the opportunity to tease out the ideas and overlay the concepts that were clearly defined in Chapter One, and are now pulled together within the same notional clusters for the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Development of the project

The project has been realised through the development of a body of work that responds to the clusters as outlined in Chapter One. These clusters and their associated work groups are: **Tents** - an invisible ongoing creepage of place, the subscape infrastructure and the vast, public realm of *hard yakka* as yielding, intimate site; **Toffee entropy** - how we construct and reconstruct place beyond recognition, and the entropy implicit in this constructed place; **Mushroom emergence** - intervention and emergence, ideas of surface, veneer and eruption and how we move through space; **The bitumen road** - cracks and scars, the erasure and memory of place and the sentiment associated in the perception, representation and recounting of place.

This chapter details the development of each cluster work towards the final body of work.

3.1 Tents

This group of work has developed from an ongoing curiosity I have felt in relation to Telstra pit canopies, the canvas tents erected over open pits while the technicians repair the underground cabling. What intrigues me is the illusion of privacy within such a public, ground level and tangible space. Their visual exclusiveness evokes a certain intimacy implicit in the act of fixing and maintenance within the technology. I have only ever observed male technicians working in these sites, lowering themselves down into the hole in the ground. This idea of penetrating the bituminous skin, accessing the technology that increasingly penetrates and colonizes the subterranean landscape evokes many connotations.

The associations with intimacy and penetration speak of a feminised landscape being claimed. In his book *The Cartographic Eye* Simon Ryan discusses the colonial 'idea' of the 'veiled' and feminised landscape, the eroticised unknown and unexplored terrain. Writes Ryan:

Exploration is a gendered practice. It is structured in terms of an active male penetrating the inert yet resistant female land. I have suggested before that the scopic regimes of exploration have a strongly Cartesian orientation, and that is part of the way exploration journals authorise their claim to truth. This Cartesian viewpoint is also exclusively male; expressed as a male domination of the continent through the persistent metaphor of land as female.¹

Ryan then goes on to quote and comment on Charles Sturt's *Expedition into Central Australia*, in which Sturt describes nature's protected domain:

"A veil hung over Central Australia that could neither be pierced or raised. Girt round about by deserts, it almost appeared as if nature had intentionally closed it..." The veiled, mysterious and alluring continent tempts a specifically male viewer to lift the veil and reveal the hidden.²

The tent canopies act like a veil separating the experienced, seen world, from the underground tunnels, which only the technicians, our urban explorers, can enter.



Figures 63-64: **Telstra** canopy frame and frame with canvas cover.

¹ Ryan, Simon, [1996], pg 196.

² Ryan quotes from Charles Sturt's *Narrative of an expedition into Central Australia in 1847*. 2 Vols. London: T & W. Boone 1849.

The Telstra manhole covers are scattered all over the city's pavements, and like a dot-to-dot activity which alludes to a completed line drawing, they index the subterranean and unseen nexus of cabling that supports our seen and known environment. They speak of a vast landscape that cannot be experienced, only presumed/imagined by the evidence of the manhole covers, and highlighted when the technicians have their canopy erected.

Susan Stewart touches on this lived/inferred experience:

To walk the city is to experience the disjuncture of partial vision/partial consciousness. The narrativity of this walking is belied by the simultaneity we know and yet cannot experience. As we turn a corner, our object disappears around the next corner.³

The pit manholes lead a trail along streets and around corners marking a version of the city we know, but cannot access.

The work within this area of the project has involved producing a series of three alternative tent canopies, attached to the Telstra metal tent frames. The work has been integrated within the Telstra pit site environment within Hobart CBD, trailing the pit sites, on several occasions over the last 2 years.

The intentions of the work have been to explore the following concepts: the realm of hard yakka as a yielding site; the feminised landscape; the performance of repair as an intimate act; a technological colonization of the urban landscape; and the underlying physical properties of the place, the rocks that make it and the contours that form it, which are normally disregarded yet constantly penetrated by our technology.

Ideas affecting the aesthetics of the work are: all the tents are inappropriate/unlikely for the environment; they speak of fragility,

³ Stewart, Susan, [1984], pg 2.

transparency, veils, femininity, eroticism, fetishism, bandage and repair. None of the tents can be opened and accessed, in this way they are a folly. The tents are erected for a short time within a day and are sited around a CBD block. Each tent is sited in a different street, and can be encountered by walking around the block. No two tents are visible at the same time.

Pit(ch)

The first tent intervention in the series ***Pit(ch)*** was a roving off-site installation for Tasmanian Living Artists Week 2005. The work was located at various Telstra maintenance pit sites in the Hobart CBD. Utilizing the pit canopy tent structures the piece involved replacing the heavy-duty canvas tent with an alternative tent of diaphanous nylon organza. The organza tent was a geological map of Hobart, sewing various pieces of coloured organza to the base tent, to represent the different rock groups underlying the built environment. Each colour represented a different rock group, for example orange indicated dolerite; pink - tertiary pebble deposits; grey - carbonaceous siltstone. There were 17 rock types in total. Stitched over the map in black thread was a topographical contour map of Hobart. Suburb place names of the area were embroidered in black on the tent and the geological codes for the different rock groups were made from black vinyl signage and adhered on the inside of the tent. As the organza was transparent, the tent frame, the pit and streetscape could be seen through the tent.

The pit within the tent area was opened each day for the three days during the installation period by a Telstra technician. A sound piece was played from within the pit. The sound piece was a multi-layered recording of typically female voices within the technology found in the automated phone services of corporations and services such as Telstra, Aurora Energy, the Commonwealth Bank and Centrelink. The pitch, volume and

editing of content was important to the sound piece, producing the effect of waves of verbal babble rising from within the pit.

At the time, I noticed the proportional and conceptual similarities between Wardian boxes and the Telstra canopy covers. Wardian boxes were portable mini glass houses invented in the 1840's, which facilitated the movement of plants around the world, bringing exotic plants to the colony and endemic colonial treasures to nurserymen in England. Notions of transplantation, intervention, root systems, creepage, and a technological root nexus evolved.



Figure 65: *The Wardian Box*.

Initial ideas were of a white muslin/organza tent (think Victorian female undergarment, relating to the era of the Wardian Box) with coloured wires stitched onto the tent representing fibrous root systems, exotic plants/weeds and finally contours of a topographical map of Hobart. While working on these ideas four notions emerged: to pitch a tent, a story; the pitch of a voice, a slope.

Initial versions proved not to be visually strong enough, I felt more colour and more complexity was needed, and that the wire was too gimmicky. At the same time I was thinking of geological maps as patchwork quilts, a rock bed. So the development of what at the time I referred to as 'the organza pastel Barbara Cartland jube', the geological/contour tent,

evolved. I liked the idea of romanticising the utterly unsentimental aspects of the site in such a romantic novelette kind of way. The way in which the work developed was interesting. The unanticipated 'pastel thing' proved challenging. Various stitched sections and vinyl marking (names, codes and contours) grounded this however, and once the work was in the intended context with the sound piece and public interacting, the 'Barbara Cartland'⁴ concerns were allayed.

As I sat with the work in an inconspicuous way, I was able to observe the ranges of encounter / responses from the public.

Firstly it was noteworthy that many people didn't notice the work. There were double takes as people walked past. Some paused for a quick look and listen. Others took time to really regard the work, to touch, listen and wonder. The opportunity for double take raises our awareness of the site and our engagement with it. This is what Nicolaus Bourriard refers to as 'art being an encounter'.⁵

The following are samples of overheard comments recorded at the time:

- A mother passing with pram and small children 'these are the tents that the men fix the wires underground in....but they don't usually look like *this*'
- Two suits 'I wonder if this will be standard issue'
- A father to a small girl 'that's where we live and that's where you're mum lives' (relating to the suburb names)
- Two young women 'we can hear someone's phone conversation!' Giggles.

The work closely resembled what should be there, yet was different enough to be noticed (mostly), becoming a curious entity in its own right.

⁴ Barbara Cartland is an (in)famous romantic novelist. Her books are cautiously flirtatious; more soft cream-centred than hard-core passion. She was also famous as being the late Princess Diana's aunt.

⁵ Bourriard, Nicolaus, [2002], pg 15.

In this way it is like a shadow, referring to the subject, while also glimpsing something else. The work is entwined with our reality; it operates in relation to the goings-on of the place, within the specifics of the site. Bourriard discusses how contemporary art is an engagement within our cultural/social systems/sites:

As part of a “relationist” theory of art, inter-subjectivity does not only represent the social setting for the reception of art, which is its “environment”, it’s “field”, but also becomes the quintessence of artistic practice.⁶

Miwon Kwon echoes this appraisal of the socially interactive art practice:

A dominant drive of site-oriented practices today is the pursuit of a more intense engagement with the outside world and everyday life – a critique of culture that is inclusive of nonart spaces, nonart institutions, and nonart issues (blurring the division between art and nonart, in fact).⁷

Pit(ch) successfully contributed to the blurring of this division, and was a satisfactory start to the tent triptych.



Figures 66-67: *Pit(ch)* on site in Hobart CBD, 2006.

⁶ Bourriard, Nicolaus, [2002], Pg 22.

⁷ Kwon, Miwon, [2002], pg 24.

Tent Trip (tych)

Tent Trip (tych) was an off site intervention installed within the Hobart CBD in November 2006. The work involved placing three Telstra pit canopies over three pit sites in three street locations around a block in the city over the period of a day. The tents could only be viewed one at a time, and could be encountered progressively, by turning corners and walking the block. The typical canvas tents were replaced with three alternative tents. One was the organza tent as described previously in the work **Pit(ch)**, the other two tents were as follows.

Bandage tent

The second tent in the series refers to the way the evolving language of the technology continues to maintain and re-colonise place. As the conduits creep and claim a subterranean territory, the language is coded and loaded, integrates and overlaps existing jargon and terminology, keeping us to varying degrees worded up and linguistically in control. The language is as important for describing and claiming new ground as it is for patching and repairing rupture and breakdown. This work looks at the language applied to describe the repair and maintenance of fibre optic and telecommunication technologies.

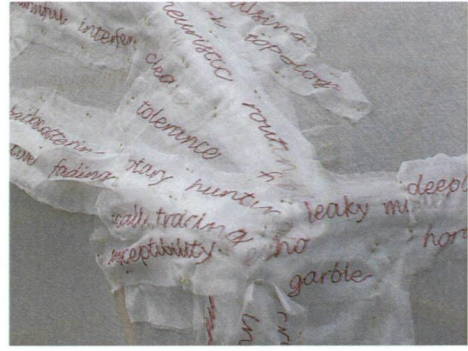
The tent cover is made from white muslin, which is transparent enough to reveal the tent frame and pit within. The material alludes to bandages and first-aid. The muslin differs significantly from the organza used in **Pit(ch)**; where the organza conjured up shiny, pastel, decorative and veil-like associations, the muslin presents a more pragmatic, medical, visceral and unromantic image. Attached onto the muslin base tent with miniature safety pins are hundreds of strips of muslin, reminiscent of suture tape or bandaids, supposedly repairing the repair. Each strip has text embroidered in red thread and describes the equipment, methods and systems related to maintaining telecommunication and fibre optic systems. The strips are stitched in clusters over the main areas of strain on the tent, notably at the

corners and seams (like the leather elbow patches on a tweed jacket). The strips pile over each other like wads of padding, with the text overlapping, and the red lettering accumulating beneath the layers of muslin, resembling pooling blood. The tent, flimsy and fragile, manages to look like a Red Cross tent.

The text is curiously loaded and evocative of emotions, landscape, and entwinement. For example 'deeply depressed cladding fibre', 'mesh topology', 'grandfathered systems', 'heuristic routing' are layered in their readings. When combined with other text such as 'cleave coupling', 'worst hour of the year', 'path loss', a rich linguistic landscape is being formed, which describes a place far away from the dry terminology normally associated with the technology.

The patching of text on the tent fabric is reminiscent of Tracy Emin's *All the people I have slept with*, as discussed in the previous chapter. While the content of the work differs markedly, the effects of hand stitching and the making of something sturdy and prosaic into something frail and personal resonate with the work.

In setting this tent up in the Hobart CBD as part of the intervention ***Tent Trip (tych)***, I realised how the environment affected the success of the aesthetics of the work. For example the wind blew the tent and the text bandages so that they became ruffled and lost the tension that was evocative of suture. After a time, I felt the tent looked like it was wrapped in toilet paper rather than delicate muslin bandages, and that the reading of the text was lost in the scale of the high traffic public space. In this way, while the tent worked as part of the public intervention, the optimum installation is within a gallery situation, for people to take the time to read the text, and for the bandages to work as intended.



Figures 68-69: **Bandage tent** on site in Hobart CBD, 2006.

Quality Street

The final tent looks at the feminised landscape, and plays with overt and stereotyped femininity within a chocolate box aesthetic. This is sited within a realm where masculinity is stereotyped within a *hard yakka* genre.

The tent is made from crimson satin, is more gown than tent, and represents a map of all the Telstra maintenance access pits within the most congested area of the Hobart CBD. The gown-like tent is reminiscent of a 'Quality Street Chocolates' tin, and so street names are embroidered in decorative scroll style gold lettering and the pits sites are brass eyelets, which are brooch-like in appearance and signify the linking of things. Marking the subterranean cabling between pit sites are lines of cigarette burn holes. The burn holes have layered reading. I remember my mother warning the daughters that the worst thing we could do to our formal dresses was to burn them with our cigarettes – she could remove stains, fix zippers, take in, let out, re-elastic, but could not repair cigarette burns; there is no invisible mending a cigarette burn. The burn holes penetrate the satin, and as this is the only non-transparent tent, importantly allow the inside of the tent to be viewed. The repeated burns speak of eroticism or fetishism, scarification, branding and describe a sexual intimacy/violence aligned to the tent/exploration metaphor. Sturt's veiled landscape has been pierced.



Figures 70-71: **Quality Street** on site in Hobart CBD, 2006.

Final Exhibition

Tent trip (tych) has been re-installed within the gallery for the final exhibition, bringing the roving public intervention into the gallery context, along with all its associated conceptual baggage. The gallery installation includes video documentation of the work in-situ, and depicts an off site narrative of encounter, traversing the cityscape, corners and all.

Going down

The final part of this work within the gallery exhibition consists of the video projection **Going down** which is installed within the constructed room which also houses the **Furnace** projection onto **Toffee Fissure** (see **Toffee Entropy** cluster – 3.2).

The projection installation involves a video projector placed on a plinth in close proximity to a wall within this room. This near placement allows for a miniature projection. Where the image is projected, a square hole has been cut into the external gyprock cladding, and a square piece of muslin has been pinned on to patch the gap, doubling as a miniature projection screen and a band-aide. The material is diaphanous enough to permit the image to be viewed from both sides. **Tent Trip(tych)** is installed on the outside of this wall.

The image projected is of a camera's viewpoint going down into a Telstra manhole, and beginning to navigate the underground tunnel. The footage stops at a point in the tunnel and is then jump-start-edited back to the beginning of the journey from ground level. This is projected in a loop evoking a relentless in and out burrowing and penetration of the bituminous skin into the sub-scape.



Figure 72: *Going Down*, still from video, 2007.

3.2 Toffee entropy

The suburbs present us with a negation of the present; a landscape consumed by its past and its future. Hence the two foci of the suburbs: the nostalgic and the technological.⁸

This is an apt description of the impetus that drives our evolving construction and the way in which we impose memory on place, and it reflects my intention within this cluster of work.

The work in this section is concerned with how we continually construct and reconstruct place often beyond recognition; how the concept of in-filling triggers notions of erasure, memory and transformation; the skin of order containing (barely or occasionally) the underlying chaos; how the materials we believe to be concrete and permanent are in fact fluid and

⁸ Stewart, Susan, [1984], pg 1.

transient within a greater time scale; and how the built environment in flux offers up chances for poetic interpretation.

The works produced within this cluster include the site responsive installation, ***infill – materials of mass construction***, and the installations ***Toffee fissure***, ***Spirit level*** and ***Pliant*** included in the final gallery exhibition.

Infill – materials of mass construction

Infill was a work installed for the Mountain Festival Sculpture Trail, Cascade Rivulet, March 2006. The work referred to the constant layering within our constructed place. The work was sited opposite Vacluse Gardens Retirement Village, which, as made evident in signage on the rivulet site, has been developed around a colonial house of heritage value, Vacluse House. The house was constructed from convict labour using materials that are now imbued with romance and sentiment, notably the 'convict bricks', which at the time of being laid were perfunctory materials of mass construction. The building has undergone various permutations as the site has evolved. During the most recent layer of development doors and windows have been in-filled, annexes have been attached and a village seems to have been cut and pasted onto the site, sprawling over a significant length of the rivulet.

The work consisted of a pre-fabricated pine stud wall frame, bolted to post supports, which were set into concrete footings. The frame was installed at the edge of the Cascade Rivulet walking track, facing the Vacluse Retirement Village development. The frame, 2.4 x 2.4m, resembled the wall of a house, with door and window cavities. Toffee bricks infilled the window and door cavities, with sheets of perspex screwed into the cavity frames, retaining the bricks in place. A gap was left between the bottom of the perspex and the bottom of the cavities, to allow the toffee to be directly visible.

Over the period of the exhibition, in fact half an hour after installing the work, the toffee commenced its transformation into its liquid state. The gap between perspex and frame allowed for seepage of the toffee beyond the cavity, like a slow lava flow, over the wall frame.

The work was developed around the notion of wanting to infill a cavity that usually provided access or visibility. The work was created in response to the considerable size of the redevelopment of Vacluse Gardens and given the nature of the seemingly cut and paste design, it seemed appropriate to choose the pre-fabricated frame system.

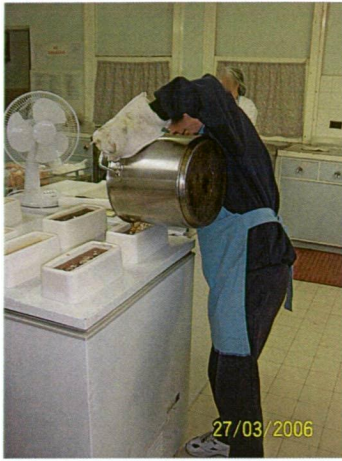
Having made a toffee rope ladder in the past I wished to explore other manifestations of toffee construction, making the most of its quality of fluid transformation. So the leap to infill the door and window cavities of the frame with toffee bricks occurred.

I made some trial 'bricks' with silicone cookware, and found silicone to be the best medium for mould making. Sourcing some New Zealand house commons (thinner than Australian commons) I made several silicon full and half brick moulds. Making the toffee bricks required over 150kilos of sugar.⁹

As part of the process of brick construction, I worked with female inmates from Risdon Prison, to produce a small quantity of the bricks. This provided a conceptual link between a contemporary convict brick and the historic bricks referred to within the work. It was important that the inmates had a hand in commenting on the 'sweetening' of history.

⁹

The project received 120 kilos of sugar from *Greens Foods* (4 Roses) as sponsorship.



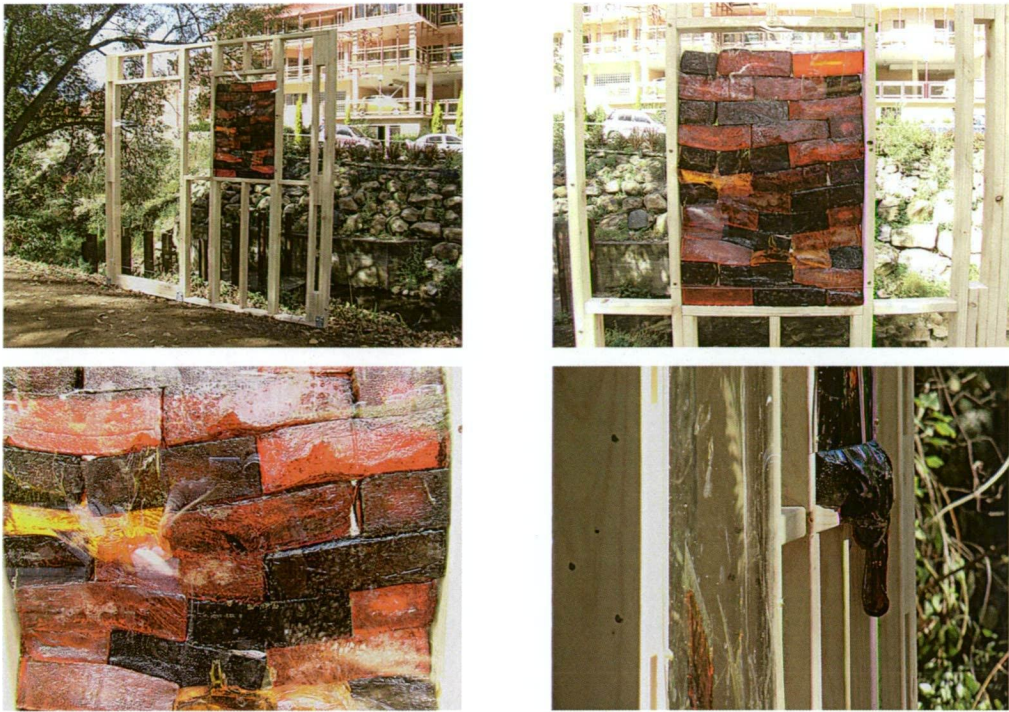
Figures 73-74: Risdon inmates making the toffee bricks

The work took one month to make (cooking toffee), one day to install, and half an hour to 'melt'. It was actually pretty scary laying the final layers of bricks, as the supporting layers were already morphing. (Lucky the perspex was there!)

This was disappointing as only a few people actually viewed the bricks before they changed, and while I acknowledge that with this type of work there are a lot of forces at play, for the work to be successful, I needed to alter timing/quantity factors if I wanted more control over the work.

With this in mind, the work pretty much did what I wanted it to do (albeit at a much faster rate). Through developing this installation I realised there were a few things I could do differently: work within a smaller cavity (a small window size) so the toffee mass isn't so great; either use thicker Perspex which is less likely to warp or use a wooden architrave to retain the edges of the bricks more successfully; experiment with freezing the bricks for the time lag between cooking and installing, to retard the 'meltdown'.

Interestingly, people thought the toffee was sap, or at least made a connection between the pine frame and resin.



Figures 75-78: *Infill – materials of mass construction* (detail), 2006.

Toffee fissure and Spirit level pieces

Work within this cluster for the final exhibition includes the pieces *Toffee fissure* and *Spirit level*

Toffee fissure is a long narrow window, set into the gallery wall. The window is made from Tas oak¹⁰, and is installed with Tas oak architraves. Filling in the window cavity is a vertical line of single toffee bricks, stacked on top of each other, filling the entire cavity. The architrave overlaps the cavity slightly, holding the bricks in place. The toffee bricks are cooked at varying lengths of time, resulting in a variety of shades of amber, and consequently degrees of hardness. The lighter the shade, the softer the toffee. This rate of hardness affects the individual brick's rate of returning to a liquid state. As the toffee begins to 'liquefy' it begins to seep out of the cavity and down the wall, like a weeping wound.

¹⁰ Tasmanian oak is a hardwood commonly used within the building industry for flooring, structural beams, architraves and skirting. Tas oak is sourced from a range of eucalypts endemic to Tasmania.

The toffee window is lit from behind and when entering the room on the other side of the window, it is evident that the light source is a video projector. The video projection ***Furnace*** details a rectangular flaming light, which projects directly over the window, with dark abstract rectangular forms around the vertical edges. The footage was filmed at K&D Bricks and Pavers, one of the first commercial brick kilns in Hobart, and shows the fiery furnace as seen through a crack between the stacked bricks which have just come through the kiln. The power of the heat, the cooking of the brick, the genesis of raw ingredients to building material, parallel with the cooking of sugar to make toffee. The light projected onto the toffee highlights the entropy at play within the toffee 'melt down', and speaks of an ongoing state of flux implicit in the built environment.

The installation is a reduction of the public work ***infill***. This suits the intimate nature of the gallery, with its connotations of collections, editions and object, and echoes the projects concerns with the discrete evoking the monumental. It allows for factors such as removing the necessity for perspex to retain the toffee, allowing for a more tangible and visceral experience of the work. The wall in which the window sits was constructed as part of the installation, with giprock on the outside, and the stud framework revealed on the inner wall. The window appears like a crack in a wall, the window permits visual access to either side. If the window is filled in, this access is denied, and the window becomes obsolete.

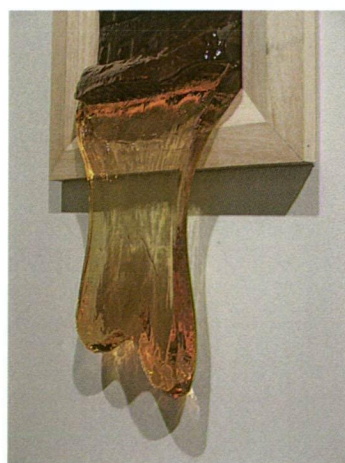
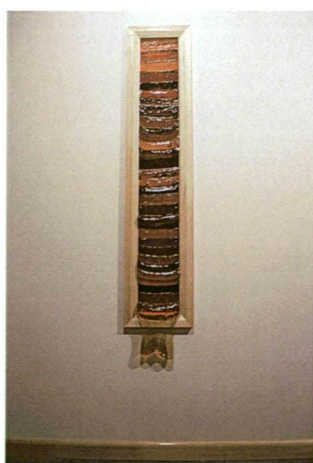


Figure 79-80: ***Toffee Fissure***, 2007.

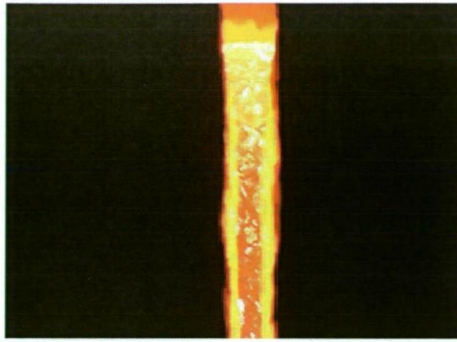


Figure 81: *Furnace*, still from video, 2007.

Spirit Level

This sense of chaotic horizontality is perhaps the primary spatial experience of the suburbs. In their intimate interiors the high ceilings of suburban dwellings may preserve a private verticality, but the public space is flat, uranian. It resembles the sea-like interior described by Sturt.¹¹

Spirit level is installed on the wall within the corridor section of the final exhibition. It consists of a two-metre length of Tas oak attached to the wall like a beam/shelf. Placed on the beam are 7 toffee bricks, arranged length ways, one brick butting into the next, like the base line of a brick wall. Placed on top of the bricks is a spirit level.¹² When the bricks were first installed on the shelf and the level placed on them, the level's bubble sat in the centre between the indicators, showing the shelf and brick footing to be level. Over time as the bricks morph, the spirit level shifts, and the bubble goes off centre, indicating that the structure is no longer level, and is unstable as a footing. Gradually, the bricks drip down off the beam, like stalactites.

Adhered to the spirit level is vinyl lettering which reads:

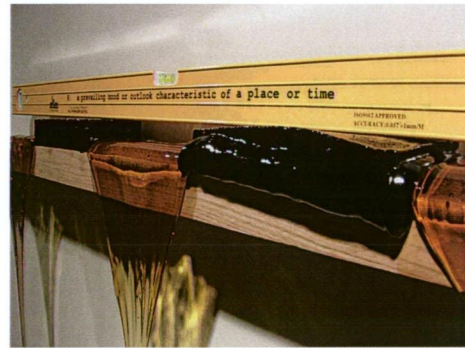
9. a prevailing mood or outlook characteristic of a place or time.

¹¹ Carter, Paul, [1987], pg 279.

¹² A device for testing horizontality, consisting of a glass tube containing an oil or spirit with a moveable bubble which is only in the centre of the tube if the device is horizontal.

The text is taken from the Encarta World English Dictionary, found on the Microsoft Word program, and is the 9th definition of *spirit*. This is but one of 15 definitions available within this dictionary tool, chosen for the connection of spirit to place, and to play with the irony of the spirit level's complicity in the construction of place.

Where **Toffee fissure** is a vertical in-filling, a sealed but morphing chasm between two spaces, **Spirit level** describes the horizontality of the built landscape. It speaks to the spirit of a place, our place; how much room is left for us to live imaginary lives in the constructed veneer. Are the cracks, frays and fissures symbolic portals of opportunity to replenish our non-material lives, to leap into the crack's verticality before the crack is filled in. When Carter discusses our intimate vertical spaces, he refers to Bachelard's vertical spatiality of the dreamer's house and the city's lack of verticality.¹³ That the buildings of suburbia may physically offer a slight profile on the landscape, their repetition and the surrounding matrix of urban surfaces is more like a sea than a landscape, and except for rupture/cracks, is at once suffocating and unavailable, devoid of spaces for dreaming.



Figures 82-83: **Spirit level**, 2007.

¹³ Carter makes reference to verticality and quotes Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*, in *The Road to Botany Bay*, pg 279.

Pliant

This work is connected to the cluster for its resonance with the notions of the ephemerality of the built environment, rather than the link with toffee as a medium.

Pliant forms part of the final gallery exhibition, and involves the plywood bracing of a stud wall frame that adjoins the two *Gyprock*-clad walls of the projection room. One of these walls houses **Toffee fissure** and the **Furnace** video projection, the other houses the **Going Down** video projection. The stud wall is clad with five sheets of brace ply; a material prevalent within the building industry, used for its cost effectiveness and immediacy of installation. Running just above the centre of each sheet is a continuous grit-blasted horizontal line, one third of the height of the plywood. Grit-blasting removes the soft (pale) wood leaving the darker grain, revealing a lacing of woven grains, as the grain in each veneer runs in a different direction to the other veneers. The grit-blasted section resembles the band of wood revealed on a ring-barked tree and the placement of it on the plywood evokes an horizon. The blasted plywood appears at once cavernous and skeletal, revealing an internal structure of a material typically used for cladding, concealing, covering.

The plywood has been blasted to such an extent in some areas that the wood has completely gone and holes and cracks have formed in the material. These cavities in the material allow the other side of the wall to be viewed, either into the darkened projection room, where glimpses of **Furnace** and **Going down** can be seen, or from inside the projection room into the corridor space where **Spirit level** is mounted and dripping.

The title is a pun on the material and the definition of the word as 'yielding'. The yielding material offers glimpses to other works that are in the process of transformation.



Figures 84-85 *Pliant*, 2007.

3.3 Mushroom emergence

Mushrooms

Overnight, very
Whitely, discreetly
Very quietly

Our toes, our noses
Take hold on the loam,
Acquire the air.

Nobody sees us,
Stops us, betrays us;
The small grains make room.

Soft fists insist on
Heaving the needles,
The leafy bedding,

Even the paving.
Our hammers, our rams,
Earless and eyeless,

Perfectly voiceless,
Widen the crannies,
Shoulder through holes. We

Diet on water,
On crumbs of shadow,
Bland-mannered, asking

Little or nothing.
So many of us!
So many of us!

We are shelves, we are
Tables, we are meek,
We are edible,

Nudgers and shovers
In spite of ourselves.
Our kind multiplies:

We shall by morning
Inherit the earth.
Our foot's in the door.

Sylvia Plath ¹⁴

As Plath's poem suggests, the work in this section deals with notions of emergence.

Work within this cluster examines the concepts of intervention, emergence and maintenance. It looks at the layers of veneer on the landscape penetrated from within, the pathways we construct to colonize space and the associated urban creepage, constructed and technological. Work within this cluster explores the significance of the cellar site –where the earth meets the construction, and where the inside (intimate, miniature, contained) connects with the outside (gigantic, containing, immense). The work also reflects on the relentless cycle of construction and repair.

¹⁴ Hughes, Ted (ed), *Sylvia Plath: Collected poems*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1981.

Work produced in this group includes ***Tread softly***, a site responsive ephemeral installation, and ***Paddy Pallin(drome)***, the installation included within the body of work for the final exhibition.

Tread Softly was a work installed for *Come with me* (a group exhibition and sound event) at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (RTBG) April 2006, curated by James Newitt, a fellow post graduate student.

The work looks at the pathways we use to reach wilder places, how pathways become floors, how cracks form in between the floorboards, and how the landscape concealed emerges. Our constructed interventions of the landscape become intervened by it, so we need to maintain it, and so it goes on. The work responds to the cellar site, a zone of flux where the natural and constructed are in a constant jostle for dominance. Bachelard likens the perception of our consciousness to the house:

The house is a privileged entity for a phenomenological study of the intimate values of inside space...for our house is our corner of the world. As often has been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word.¹⁵

And in this house the cellar represents our unstructured subconscious:

As for the cellar...it is first and foremost the dark entity of the house, the one that partakes of the subterranean forces. When we dream there, we are in harmony with the irrationality of the depths...but for the cellar, the impassioned inhabitant digs and re-digs, making its very depth active. The fact is not enough, the dream is at work. When it comes to excavated ground, dreams have no limit.¹⁶

Tread softly was sited in the disused cellar of the Friends Cottage (the old head gardeners cottage). The work involved excavating the earth floor of the cellar, constructing a wooden floor, and allowing for gaps between the boards, into which mushroom compost was laid. The work was installed one week prior to opening to allow the mushrooms (at pinning stage) to

¹⁵ Bachelard, Gaston, [1994 ed], pg 3-4.

¹⁶ Bachelard, Gaston, [1994 ed], pg 18.

grow. From this time until after closing, the mushrooms grew from pinpricks to fully blown and sporing. The project was supported by Huon Valley Mushrooms, who assisted in trials over the months preceding the show, and cultivated the mushrooms to pinning stage for the show.

A tiny surveillance camera was screwed into the cellars floorboards in the far corner that filmed the viewers' feet as they walked around the space. Viewers were able to watch their trodden progress on a small surveillance monitor, attached to the ceiling, the footage was of the underside of the floorboards of the cottage above. This gave the curious experience of watching your feet move above your head.

Attached in a more hidden corner, behind the door, was a small web camera that recorded time-lapse documentation of the progress of the work over the installation period. The documentation was downloaded onto a computer in the space next to the cellar.

Tread Softly was a performative installation where the audience's engagement with the work affected its outcome. As you walked in the space, the surveillance camera heightened the tension of walking around the mushrooms; if you watched your feet on the monitor, you were more likely to tread on the mushrooms.

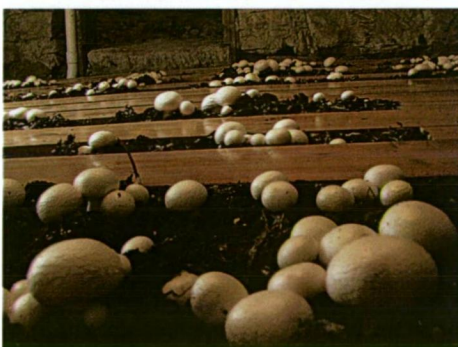
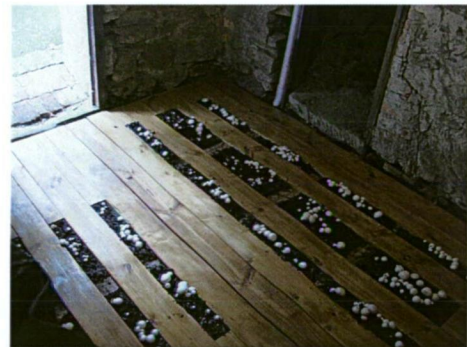
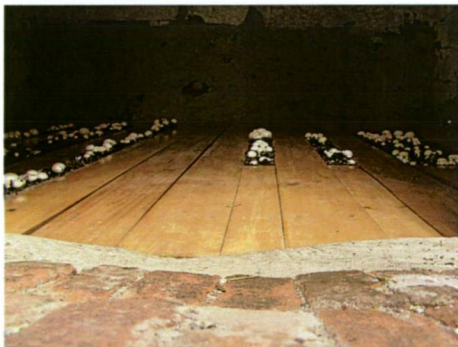
The work had an evolution based on the need to locate an appropriate site. The initial site was to be the Gardens' conservatory, for advantages of constant temperature, and the concept of inside/outside. The project was only to fill a small area of the conservatory, due to the practical limitations of the work being so young in its development, and a modest budget. I realised quickly that for the work to be successful, it needed to fill the whole space. As this was not achievable, other alternatives were sought.

The next stage of evolution was to excavate an area of lawn the size of a long, narrow hallway (modelled on the one in my home), lay the

floorboards so they were flush with the grass, and construct a canvas tent over it. I liked this for the connections between pathways and floors, exploration, reaching wilder places etc (and the tent tied in with my other work '*pitch*'). But again practicalities ruled. The temperature couldn't be controlled to successfully grow the mushrooms; the tent needed to meet safety guidelines of the RTBG (i.e. be designed by an engineer and professionally fabricated), resulting in great expense.

I then considered the floor of the heritage listed Friends Cottage, dubious whether permission would be granted. In discussion with Gardens staff, I was made aware of a never used, dilapidated cellar below the cottage. Straight away I knew this was perfect. A perfect conceptual siting, a perfect environment for mushrooms, and perfect as a site that is unknown to the public, that the work would provide access to. I was given a key and preceded to install.

Tread softly successfully achieved its vision and was an important trial towards the work ***Paddy Pallin(drome)***.



Figures 86-88: ***Tread Softly***. Figure 89: ***Tread Softly***, monitor detail, (bottom right). 2006.

Paddy Pallin(drome)

This work echoes the concepts of pathways and floors of ***Tread softly***. The work responds to my own hallway at home in terms of similar proportions and the way the floorboards run across the space, not along it. This positioning is evocative of duckboarding prevalent within Tasmanian national parks. Duckboarding provides access to wilder places, and permits engagement with a landscape without our touching the earth, or the earth being touched by us. As I walk down my hallway to put folded washing away in the various bedrooms, this feature of my own hallway has often provided access to imaginary wanderings in landscapes based on past walking trips I have undertaken, which are now committed to memory.



Figures 90: duck boarding at Mt Field National Park, Tasmania, (left).

Figure 91: my hallway at home, (right).

The work consists of a long, narrow open-ended hallway, ten metres in length, which can be entered from either end. This is a raised wooden floorboard hallway, where the floorboards run across the space, not down the length of it. The floorboards, while bearing the dimensions of duckboards, are made from Tas oak, typical of domestic internal flooring (certainly of the hallway at home), and are sealed and varnished appropriately for an internal floor. At each end of the hallway, the

floorboards butt against each other to make a solid floor. After approximately two metres of passage, cracks begin to appear between the boards, reminiscent of the gaps between duckboards, and showing them to be more plank than tongue-in-groove flooring. As progress is made down the passage-way the crack size increases to large gaps and eventually in the centre of the passage way there is more gap than board, more chasm than ground, resulting in a kind of hopscotch navigation through the narrow space. Travelling through to the other end of the passageway, the gaps slowly diminish to cracks and back to solid flooring again. The flooring and cracks are symmetrical on either side of the central gap, a mirror image. Emerging though every crack is mushrooms. Whether squeezing through a narrow crack, or blooming like carpet in the wide gaps, the mushrooms speak of an underlying landscape, concealed and revealed, threatening to overtake the constructed intervention. As described in Plath's poem they have their foot in the door. Their emergence poses a point of direct engagement and contact between traveller and landscape, while the structure remains to navigate our distance, our detachment, our control over a wildness. The patterning of boards/gaps/boards evokes the repetition of fray and repair implicit in the ongoing maintenance required to uphold our intervention within the landscape, without maintenance the framework will fall apart.

The way people negotiate themselves through the space is an important part of the work. Do they cautiously navigate the cracks and gaps; is there empathy for the mushrooms; will they avoid harming them; are they drawn to it with a kind of vertigo? Or is it an invitation to remove their shoes and enjoy the sensation of walking over the mushrooms with bare feet? The work becomes more than a visual experience, there is a tension of complicity and engagement with the work and its outcome. I am interested in an empathy felt towards the mushrooms, and am reminded of the *Dokonjo Daikon*¹⁷ in Japan. The *Dokonjo Daikon*, which translates as

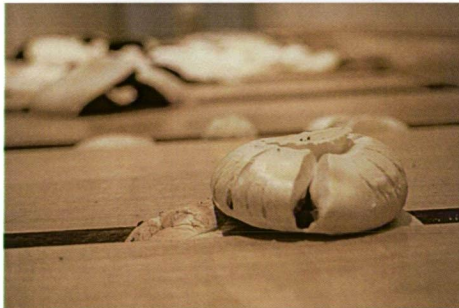
¹⁷ I first read about the *Dokonjo Daikon* in the local newspaper, The Mercury, in June 2005. I have followed its progress via the weblog – 'Asia exile – Times online – vegetable atrocity'.

'radish with balls', was found emerging through the bitumen pavement in Aioi city, November 2005. The radish attracted cult status as a symbol of nature's perseverance, until it was 'beheaded' by an unknown assailant, resulting in mass public outcry. The Sumitomo Techno Service in Tokyo is a centre for 'life prolonging' research, and is currently trying to grow cells taken from the daikon's remains in an attempt to incubate a new fully formed *Dokonjo Daikon*. This empathy and empowerment the people of Aioi felt by the glitch in the urban fabric and the subversive opportunism of the radish is intriguing, and speaks of a vindication of our yielding place, echoing Plath's poetic homage.

The title ***Paddy Pallin(drome)*** refers to the mainstream comodification and definition of our engagement with 'nature'. The Paddy Pallin adventure store is country-wide, and akin to the Myers of the adventure gear world. It is a well-known, family friendly point of sale and departure into the wilderness experience. Its customer base predominantly enters the wilderness experience via duckboards. The reference to a palindrome describes the flip like mirroring of the floorboards, an architecturally landscaped palindrome, while also referring to the self-fulfilling cycle of construction and repair.

Connected to this work, yet situated in the ***Toffee fissure*** room, is the time-lapse documentation from ***Tread softly***. The documentation is played on a wall-mounted computer screen, the same as the one used to show the ***Tent trip(tych)*** documentation. The screen is mounted in the corner of the room, symmetrical to the ***Tent trip(tych)*** monitor across the exhibition space. Mounted in this same room, on the other side of the ***Paddy Pallin(drome)*** hallway partition wall, is another computer monitor showing real time footage of ***Paddy Pallin(drome)*** as recorded by a surveillance camera installed within the hallway. This captures the viewer's navigation through the space, and places other viewers in a position of monitoring their progress. This surveillance highlights an awareness to the level of compliance in our behaviour within the public realm. Do we act/engage

'appropriately' or like the frays within our yielding place, are there opportunities for intimate engagement.



Figures 92-95: **Paddy Pallin(drome)**, 2007.

3.4 The bitumen road

The intention of the work in this section is to examine the sentiment and romance often implicit in remembering place. The work reflects on how the cracks of strain are inevitably sites for relentless repair; how the miniature may describe the monumental; the urban veneers laid on the greater geology of our place and how the roads that provide access to a landscape describe and change it.

The work developed within this section is the final gallery exhibition wall piece, ***Bitumen profiles***.

Bitumen profiles involve a series of five framed pieces of bitumen road. The bitumen pieces are approximately 800mm long x 100mm wide x 10mm thick, and are in proportion to the broken white lines in the middle of the road. The bitumen has been cut from sections of road within the Hobart area that have been resurfaced in the last year. The pieces were cut and planed on site by a member of the Hobart City Council road crew using a diamond cutter. This produces a sliver of road, cutting across the gradient like a cross section of rock, exposing the varieties of gradient and matrix, with an outcome similar to terrazzo.

The pieces of road are mounted in box style frames made from Tasmanian Oak and are reminiscent of a quasi museum/geological collection aesthetic. The frames are complete with engraved brass plate signage. The engravings act as a documentation of the siting of the bitumen; stating location, reason for removal, crew engaged in the activity, and an anecdote that places it within a human (emotional) experience; our entanglement with the hysteresis at play. All documentation is fictional, but like all good lies, they ring true. In this way street names, building relations and GPS readings are real, but not in relation to where the segments of road actually came from. Job descriptions, crew names and anecdotes are credible, but fictitious. This is a fitting use of the anecdote, which means not published, or outside the official document. The fictitious nature of this part of the work speaks to the questionable accuracy of our depiction, representation and recollection of place. That hysteresis is not only the visible evidence of the strain, but the trembling legs on which our accounts/stories stand.

The text engraved on the brass plates is as below:

*Wentworth St, behind St Johns Hospital, South Hobart. 42°53.776S,
147°18.403E. 23/6/06. Patching and filling. Crew: Shane, Mark, Dave,
Henty.*

An elderly resident told us that ever since he was a boy he's noticed the same crack appearing in the same spot of road every couple of years. He's named it Nellie (as in Melba).

Queen St, near Princes St, Sandy Bay. 42°53.643S, 147°19.711E. 3/8/06. Road widening. Crew: Will, Gibbo, Colin, John. Gibbo said that when he resurfaces a road he feels like he is dressing it, making it decent in public again. The crew said that was too weird.

Macquarie St, near Murray St, CBD. 42°53.128S, 147°19.569E. 24/5/06. Resurfacing. Crew: Paul, Phil, Jules, Dean. This year Macquarie St has needed twice the amount of repair as Davey St. Paul said that on arterial city routes, out flowing traffic wears the road faster than in flowing traffic.

Melville St, opposite the Ocean Child, CBD. 42°52.7285S, 147°19.570E. 15/3/06. Resurfacing. Crew: Stewie, Nick, Ben, Jeff. Bumped into Pete Jenkins who watched the crew scraping back the road with me and told me Mary had lost their baby girl.

Park St, in front of the old tollhouse, Newtown. 42°51.476S, 147°18.683E. 8/7/06. Speed bumps. Crew: Joel, Mike, James, Marty. The owners of the old tollhouse showed us a toll-coin found when the footpath had been resurfaced. They said that before the road was sealed it was the main northern route out of town.

The frames are hung with a space of 1.5 metres in-between each frame, acting as an inversion of the white lines on the black road, resulting in black lines on the white road (gallery wall).

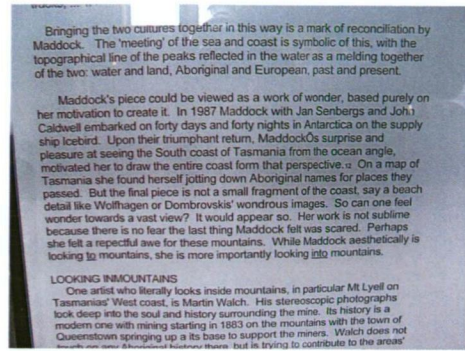
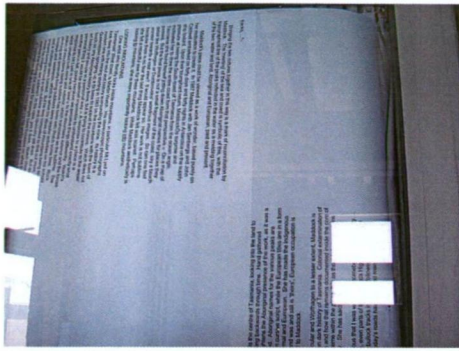
Running through each segment of framed road is a sinuous crack, made in the studio with a hammer and chisel, evoking a continuous line. Filling the cracks are embroidered representations of moss. The style of

embroidery applied is known as 'plush embroidery', a fashionable style used in Tasmania in the mid 1800's by colonial Tasmanian women such as Louisa Anne Meredith, to depict local flora. The embroidery is in fact a miniature handmade loop pile carpet, where the loops are cut, brushed to produce a soft velvety pelt, then trimmed and sculpted with scissors. The thread used for the embroidery varies from silk, cotton, wool and rayon, to produce a textured moss-like environment. The embroidery sits proud of the bitumen, raised like real moss in the cracks in the pavement, and is evocative of mountain ranges above the plain. The embroidered representations contain and tame the wildness/vastness of the real, containing landscape, and in this way I am reminded of Laings' 'Groundspeed' domesticating the wild forest.

The notions of the continuous line suggesting the topographical profile of a landscape resonate with Bea Maddock's *terra spiritus – a darker shade of pale*, which offers a circumnavigated profile of Tasmania. Where Maddock's work describes the external margins of the place from an outsider's view looking in, the profile in ***Bitumen Profiles*** describes an internal navigation, as accessed by road, which by its presence alters and conceals the landscape it accesses. With this in mind, it was interesting to find on the window that connects my studio to the one next-door, paper used to block out vision between spaces. This paper turned out to be a photocopy of part a of an essay in which Bea Maddock is quoted:

I was always conscious that I was walking in someone else's country....As you drive over roads, even parts of the Midlands Highway, I think you ought to remember the bullock tracks invariably followed the original Aboriginal tracks and today's roads have replaced many of the bullock tracks...¹⁸

¹⁸ I have been unable to source this quote from Bea Maddock. It is in neither *Terra Spiritus – a darker shade of pale*, nor *Being and Nothingness – three decades of work by Bea Maddock*.

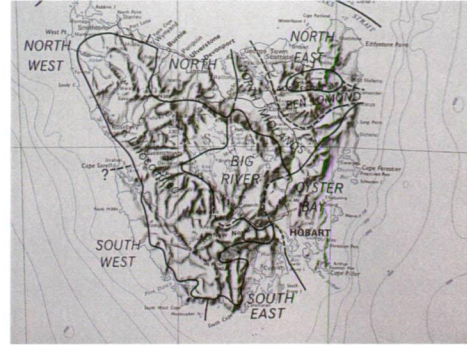
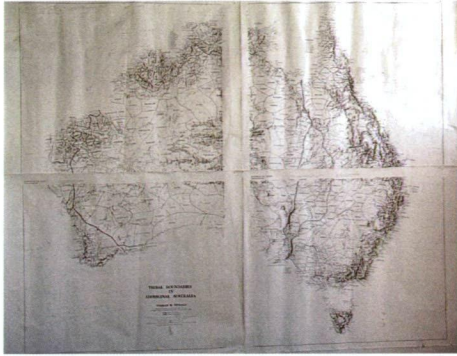


Figures 96-97: the photocopied quote on studio window.

It was uncanny to discover this description of our roads concealing the original tracks, which in a way are revealed when the bitumen becomes cracked. That the photocopied catalogue was used to conceal the window is ironic and serendipitous, given that the occurrence of concealment inflames curiosity, and that the content revealed was so pertinent to the project.

Resonating with the concept of our roads tracing aboriginal tracks is a map that is pinned to my studio wall. This is Norman B. Tindale's map of *Aboriginal Tribal Boundaries of Australia*, published in 1974. I have had this map for close to 20 years and have always responded to its aesthetics of a tessellated Australia and how the boundaries represent an overwhelming continent of dialects. However it is only since re-reading Carter's *The Road to Botany Bay* while researching this project, that I have realised the significance the map bears. Carter discusses how Tindale, in his book *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*, reveals the boundary lines that the aborigines led the white explorers through the land actually represent neutral zones between tribes, through which the aborigines could travel safely with the white pioneers and avoid transgressing others' territory. These lines are like cracks between the owned landscape, allowing for slippage and motion. In regarding the Tasmanian section of this map, it becomes evident that these intra-zones, these cracks, have become the major roads in the state. The major roads are our contemporary paths for motion through the landscape, which crack and require maintenance, and echoing Maddock's reminder, speak of a

landscape concealed and yet simultaneously revealed, and are representative as much of motion as they are of emotion.



Figures 98-99: Norman B Tindale's map of Aboriginal Boundaries of Australia on my studio wall.

The embroidered bitumen profiles resonate with Edward Casey's 'reminiscentia', the inducers of reminiscence, in the way they convincingly conjure up our experience of mossy landscapes; whether they allude to soft, wet, secretive forests, or transient and morphing places which come and go depending on the rain. The exposure of the gravel in such a detailed and aesthetic manner has taken viewers back into their own experiences of bike accidents and picking the gravel out from their knees, or playing neighbourhood cricket on blue metal driveways with similar consequences. The framed road samples lend themselves to be read equally as an urban rock collection and as a souvenir of memory relics.



Figures 100-101: *Bitumen Profiles*, 2007.

A final detail of this work alludes to the cracks of embroidered moss that run through the bitumen segments. *Bitumen Profiles* is the first work visible on entering the exhibition space and is mounted on a gallery partition wall. The other side of this partition acts as one of the hallway walls of *Paddy Pallin(drome)*. Cracks replicating the embroidered moss cracks of the bitumen segments appear to have penetrated though the wall. The cracks have been made by routing their shape into the partition wall, after which they have been filled-in with plaster and sanded off ready to be painted. This process of repair is common practice in the gallery situation, and the scars of previous exhibitions are evident with closer inspection of the gallery walls.

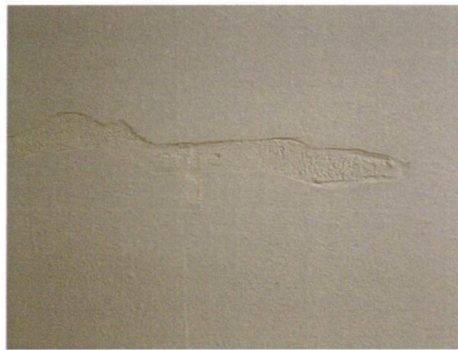


Figure 102: cracks in plaster, 2007.

The body of work produced within this research project has combined various mediums and applications to offer a multi layered investigation of the hysteresis in question.

Conclusion

In undertaking this research project I have coined the term 'spatial hysteresis' as a way of connecting the objects, events and layers of intended and unintended intervention that make up the constant deterioration and repair of our urban landscape.

I have set out to reveal the hysteresis in our urban fabric and the opportunity that it presents for an imaginative engagement within the pedestrian urban landscape.

It has been my intention to produce work that reflects the manner in which we traverse and claim space, and the consequent maintenance required to keep that space claimed. I have explored the sensual and intimate possibilities not typically associated with the perfunctory nature of construction and repair. I have endeavoured to reduce the vast and often inaccessible scope of our constructed environment to a domestically intricate scale, to encourage not only an awareness of a yielding place, but to promote an emotional interaction within the ruptures of our constructed and re-constructed place. In this way we can view the strained and yielding material as an exciting opportunity for creative interpretation, not merely as another thing needing to be fixed.

By working within this premise, I have attempted to show there is a chance to try to describe something we feel but can't name in the chaos and consequent emergence within these fracture zones of our urban veneer. For it is through the process of describing that we become aware of our entanglement.

This project had several departure points from which to commence research. These were both conceptual and material, evolving from preceding projects.

By exploring the way things within their framework fall apart, I had previously sampled the excellent entropic qualities of toffee as a sculptural medium. This is something I wished to develop within the project, both through site responsive and studio based work. The resulting works include ***infill – materials of mass construction***, ***Toffee fissure*** and ***Spirit level***. These works all pivot around the form of a brick and architectural construction armature such as stud wall frames, beams and window casements. The concepts supporting these works deal with notions of transience within the perceived permanence of our constructed place and the nostalgia imbued in the remnants of a changed environment.

The project has regarded the way we access space, and how the way in which we do this, alters the space accessed. Having previously worked with bitumen to describe our urban layers of deposition upon the greater geology, I wished to explore the material and its readings further within the definition of hysteresis being both physical and conceptual. By heralding strips of remnant road as cultural relics or geological bounty, the work ***Bitumen profiles*** examines the tenuous qualities of this urban veneer; the landscape concealed; our sentiment in describing the changed landscape; and how this crack in the landscape is indicative as much of motion as it is emotion.

The serendipitous manner in which the importance of Tindale's map of Aboriginal tribal boundaries of Australia was revealed through the research (and the appearance on my studio window of a quote from Bea Maddock reminding us of how our roads trace Tasmanian Aboriginal tracks) was highly influential in creating the work. This serendipity matched the way in which the term *hysteresis* was found and became the work's title when I commenced the project.

While there are concepts and materials from previous work that I have developed within this project, I have also taken the opportunity that such a

research project presents, to put latent ideas on the proverbial front burner, to be developed into realised works.

Exploring the readings of the Telstra tent canopies within the framework of hysteresis led to the off-site intervention ***Tent trip(tych)***, which developed over the two-year research period, and forms part of the final exhibition. Through this work I examined how the immense and complex subterranean infrastructure is indicated by the quaint and intimate technician tent canopies erected over the manholes. I am intrigued by these wistful, miniature house-like shelters, through which the male technicians enter the underground to repair the technology that continually penetrates the sub-bitumous landscape. If the technicians are like urban explorers enabling and maintaining a technological colonization of the landscape, the tents are like veils that mask the landscape, inviting the unknown to be revealed. The technical and prosaic act of repair becomes secretive, intimate and erotic. The landscape yields to the technology, as the technology yields to our hands through the act of repair.

Through the mushroom emergence works, ***Tread softly*** and ***Paddy Pallin(drome)***, I have reflected on the pathways we use to reach wilder places, how pathways become floors, how cracks form in between the floorboards, and how the concealed landscape emerges. Our constructed interventions of the landscape become intervened by it, so we need to maintain it, and so it goes on. The mushroom's emergence through the floorboards in both works pose a point of direct engagement and contact between traveller and landscape, while the floor/decking structure remains to navigate our distance, our detachment, our control over a wildness. The way people negotiate themselves becomes an important component of the work. This resonates with the idea of how we describe the way we respond to our place, its construction, and how we mediate this space. How conscious are we of our complicity in the way place yields.

While this research project concludes, discoveries made within the investigations continue to impact upon new work.

For the first time within my practice I have taken projects that have been off-site and site-responsive, and reworked them within a gallery context. This was evident in the Mountain Festival toffee work and the RTBG mushroom work, which have undergone an evolution in the studio to become new works for the examination exhibition. This process has been very satisfying and something that will persist within my practice.

The pertinence of the Tindale map continues to resonate, informing a work which I am currently undertaking for a group exhibition for the 10 Days on the Island Festival in Tasmania, March 2007. The exhibition involves three Irish artists travelling to Tasmania to work alongside three Australian artists. The show, *an other place*, reflects on the way we encounter and perceive place, how we seek familiarity amongst the unknown, and the process of fathoming the unfamiliar depths of a new place. I am developing a work for the show based on the neutral zones the map describes, and the concurrent arterial highways that trace these intra-zones.

The bitumen road continues to inform my work, and I am also developing a site-responsive installation at the Port Arthur Historic Site for the group show, *Port Arthur Project*, also within the 10 Days on the Island Festival. The concepts around Tindale's map and Maddock's quote combine with notions of access and cultural/economic imperatives (tourism) as a grounding for this installation.

The hysteresis within our constructed landscape is unrelenting and our place yields continuously. This has an enduring impact on the way I work.

List of Works

Pit(ch). Tasmanian Living Artists Week, Hobart, 2005. *Telstra* pit canopy cover made from nylon organza, representing geological, topographical and suburb maps of greater Hobart.

Infill – materials of mass construction. The Mountain Festival Sculpture Trail, 2006. Pine stud wall frame erected on Cascade Rivulet walkway. Handmade toffee bricks in-filled the window and door cavities of the stud frame. 2.4m x 2.4m.

Tread Softly. 'Come with me....' Group exhibition, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. 2006. Excavated earth floor of the 'Friend's Cottage' cellar site. Wooden floorboard construction, with mushroom compost growing mushrooms within the gaps between the floor boards. A surveillance camera and monitor documented visitor's movement through within the space.

Tent Trip(tych). Hobart CBD. 2006. Three *Telstra* tent canopies installed within the Hobart CBD. One canopy is as described in ***Pit(ch)***, the second canopy, ***Bandage tent***, was made from muslin with hand stitched text of red cotton on muslin strips, attached to the base muslin tent with miniature brass safety pins. The third canopy, ***Quality Street***, represents a *Telstra* manhole map of the Hobart CBD. Made from crimson satin, the street names are machine embroidered with gold metallic thread; the manholes are marked with brass eyelets, and repeated cigarette burns indicate the underground cabling. The dimensions of each canopy are 1.75m x 1.5m x 1.5m.

Tent Trip(tych). Examination exhibition. 2007. As above but within the gallery.

Bitumen Profiles. Examination exhibition. 2007. Five framed segments of

bitumen road, each with embroidered representations of moss, in silk, wool, cotton and rayon thread. The frames are made from Tasmanian oak, with engraved brass plates attached to each frame. The dimensions of each frame are 1000mm x 150mm.

Paddy Pallin(drome). Examination exhibition. 2007. A long, narrow hallway with a raised wooden floor, where the Tasmanian oak floorboards run across the hallway. Gaps increasingly occur between the floorboards, which reveal boxes of mushroom compost blooming with mushrooms. A security camera is positioned in the rafters above the hallway, documenting the audience's passage, which is screened on a wall mounted computer monitor in the next room. In-filled plaster cracks appear in one of the hallways wall, these correspond to the cracks in the Bitumen Profile, mounted on the other side of the wall. The dimensions of the hallway are 10m x 1m.

Toffee Fissure. Examination exhibition. 2007. A pine window box frame set into a plasterboard clad wall, with Tasmanian oak architrave. The window is in-filled with toffee bricks, which return to a liquid state during the exhibition. The framed window dimensions are 1600mm x 300mm.

Spirit level. Examination exhibition. 2007. A Tasmanian oak invisibly mounted beam on the gallery wall, supports a horizontal line of toffee bricks. A spirit level sits ontop of the brick, with vinyl lettering adhered to the level. The toffee bricks commence their transformation to a liquid state. The dimensions of the beam are 2000mm x 45mm.

Examination exhibition video works: **Furnace** and **Going down**, which are both projected within the gallery space, and **Tread softly** and **Tent trip(tych)** street documentation, which along with the surveillance documentation of Paddy Pallin(drome), are screened on wall mounted computer monitors within the gallery space.

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Image scanned from artist's website, www.robynbacken.com

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1.2m x 0.2m.

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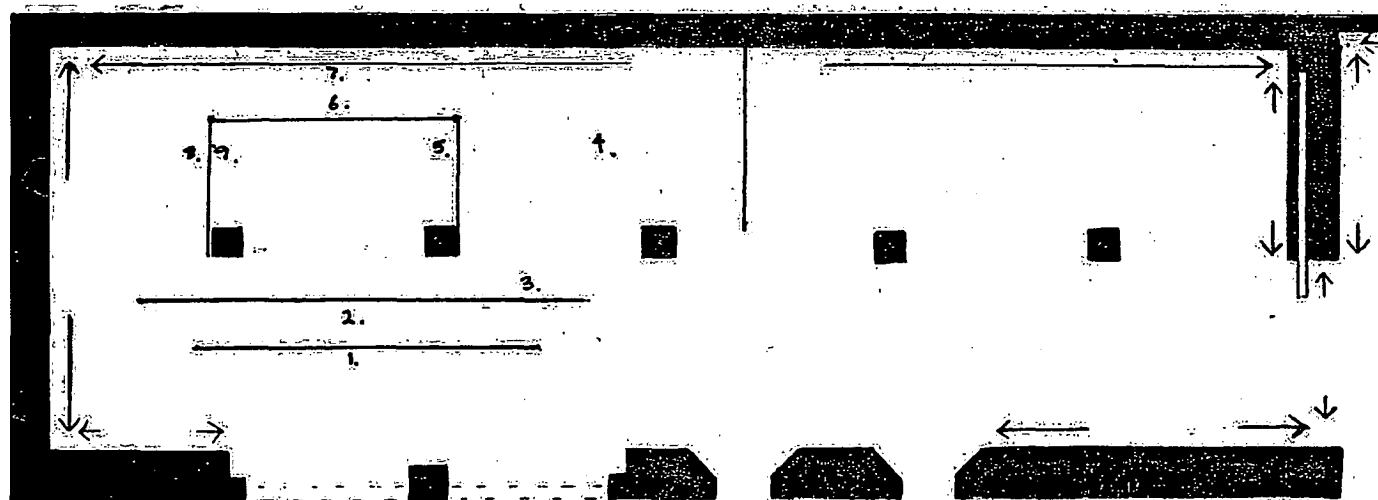
Routed plywood in-filled with plaster. 5 x 800mm x 20mm.

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1. Bitumen Profiles
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4. Tent Trip(tych)
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6. Pliant
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8. Toffee Fissure
9. Furnace

Curriculum vitae

Lucy Bleach

Qualifications

Bachelor of Visual Arts, College of Fine Arts, University of N.S.W. 1990

Master of Fine Arts, School of Art, University of Tasmania. 2007.

Art Practice

Solo exhibitions / site specific installations

- 2006 **Tent Trip(tych)** Hobart CBD.
- 2005 **Pit(ch)** Hobart CBD. Tasmanian Living Artists Week.
- 2004 **Yield** Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens. Hobart.
- 2003 **Sub** Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens. Hobart.
- 1996 **Swellstone** and **Outcrop** Fig Lane Park, Sydney.
- 1994 **Archipelago** Australian Maritime Museum, Sydney.
- 1993 **The Least Visible Sign Of Land** Constitution Dock, Hobart.
- 1992 **Kelly's Garden Project** Salamanca Arts Centre, Hobart.
- 1992 **Cup and Saucer project** Constitution Dock, Hobart.
- 1990 **Push** College of Fine Arts, UNSW, graduating show.
- 1989 **It's About Time** Various city locations, Sydney.

Group shows / site specific installations

- 2006 **Tread softly come with me**, curated by James Newitt, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens.
- 2006 **Infill Sculpture Trail**, Mountain Festival, Cascade Rivulet
- 2004 **There is a place for this Hobart Summer Festival**. Hobart City Council event. Watermans Dock.
- 2003 **Rung Scape**. Curator Celia Lendis. CAST Gallery.
- 2002 **Root/Stock Creative Landscapes**, Meadowbank Vineyard.
- 2001 **Slippery When Wet Sculpture by the Sea**, 10 Days On The Island.
- 1996 **Coquere The Progressive Dinner Party**, Downing Centre, Sydney. Curator Angharad Wynne-Jones, The Performance Space.
- 1995 **Terza Natura Artful Park**, Centennial Park, Sydney.

- 1995 **Hammer Down** *Chimera Conference*, Synapse Art Initiatives, Goethe Institute, Sydney.
- 1994 **Untitled** *Quagmire* Curator Penny Thwaite, The Performance Space, Sydney.
- 1993 **Hydrofiction** *Cake Eaters Productions*. Sydney Harbour.
- 1993 **Women Do Not Weep** *Stations of the Cross*, Art Hotline/Conservatorium of Music. MCA, Sydney.
- 1991 **King Street Mountain Project** *Walking the Street*, Newtown, Sydney.
- 1991 **In Sea and Air** *Cake Eaters Productions for Sound Culture*, The Performance Space, Sydney.
- 1990 **Fill** Directed by Derek Kreckler. *Australian Biennale*. Sydney.

GRANTS / AWARDS

- 2005 **Australian Postgraduate Award** research scholarship, University of Tasmania.
- 2004 **Arts Tasmania**. Professional Development
- 1993 **Visual Arts and Craft Board, The Australia Council**. Professional Development.

COMMISSIONS

- 2002 **Arts Tasmania**. 'CREATIVE LANDSCAPES' art in vineyards.
- 1998 **Marrickville Council**. Newtown square public artwork design.
- 1996 **Sydney City Council**. Public artwork design and construction.
- 1996 **Sue Barnesly and Lisa Hochouser Architects**. Design of public artwork for Rushcutters Bay kindergarten. Funded by Community Environment Art & Design, Australia Council.

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- 1991 Certificate of Bushland Regeneration. Padstow TAFE NSW.
- 2001 Introduction to Viticulture. TAFE Tasmania.